GENDERED READINGS OF RITUAL: EXPLORING NARRATIVES OF CHINESE RELIGION THROUGH NINETEENTH CENTURY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY WRITINGS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents gendered narratives of Chinese religion as revealed through the writings of late Nineteenth Century Christian missionaries. Through a recontextualized, material and practical approach to these sources I uncover examples of non-elite ritual practice. I utilize the personal experiences and philological work of Protestant men and women to explore instances of religion at two well-known sites of Chinese Buddhism, Putuoshan and Wutaishan. I reveal how religious adherents, both lay and ordained are classified and depicted though a Western Protestant lens. This exploration highlights how personal and non-elite narratives of Chinese religion produced by missionary women have been continually undervalued within the academic study of Chinese religion. I propose a means to overcome embedded Protestant biases within our own scholarly tradition through acknowledging the authority of ritual, of human action, within Chinese religion and within secondary missionary sources.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Allen and Vivian Baycroft. I am forever grateful for your continued support, encouragement and understanding.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the instances where I have provided the Chinese characters for select proper nouns the characters used are in Traditional form. The Romanization of Chinese names and terms has been rendered in Pinyin. I have provided verbatim the spellings and Romanizations from sources that are directly quoted and in these instances either the marker "[sic]" has been added to indicate this is an alternate or different spelling or the Pinyin has been added.

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Chapter One

Introduction

> "Elevate women, if you would renovate society," is a saying which has been so often quoted that it has become trite; but it has not lost a whit of its truthfulness from its frequent repetition.[1]

Such was the motto of Protestant missionary women living in Nineteenth Century China, women like Helen Nevius (1833-1910) whose mission life placed her within the homes and social circles of Chinese women. This sentiment, embedded with Protestant American colonialism, permeated deep into the ideologies and methods of missionary women. Cultural and religious indoctrination through education could elevate Chinese women, imprint Western ideologies upon the Chinese family, and consequently save heathen China. The missionizing work of women in China—of elevating Chinese women—was relegated to the domestic sphere. The written accounts of missionary women, their journals, diaries, and letters home, were and continue to be given very little precedence within the realm of academic authority. And yet, as this thesis aims to reveal, the humble writings of female missionaries in China offer the most unobtrusive access to the social and religious realm of Chinese daily life.

Our known history of Christianity in China is both extensive and convoluted. We can, for the most part, agree that missionaries acted as a catalyst of exchange between East and West, bringing both material culture and ideologies to China while transmitting and interpreting China into Western consciousness. The extent to which early missionary musings on China were absorbed into Western constructions of the Asian "other" is far more extensive than, I argue, modern scholarships cares to acknowledge. How much more

[1] Helen Nevius, *Our Life in China,* (New York: Robert Carter and Brother, 1869), 124.

the case within the academic study of Chinese religion. This lack of awareness in how missionary history has forged and continues to affect scholarship on Chinese religion is, simply put, a problem. Over a century ago Helen Nevius and her Protestant colleagues struggled to "elevate women." Today modern scholars of Chinese religion are ironically faced with this same struggle. Contemporary theory within the field now calls for greater attention to the human aspect of Chinese religion—to step back from a hyper textual reliance on truth in order to recognize the agency of people and their practices. This is a call to recognize the religious history of the non-elite and of women, a demographic that has remained grossly underrepresented within the academic study of Chinese religion. This underrepresentation has much to do with how religion has been defined and where religious authority has been placed within our scholarship.

1.1 Chinese Religion in Contemporary Scholarship

1.1.1 Defining Religion

The secularization and modernization of the last few decades has, and continues, to challenge the definition and application of terms like "religion" and "ritual." Western and Protestant ideological influences within the academic study of religion places these terms into highly contested grounds and elicits lively discussion, particularly by those who study so-called Eastern religions. The struggle of defining and situating religion is increased in a study such as this, which deals in sources and material that itself attempts to categorizes and define religions.

Jonathan Z. Smith bluntly, and I think correctly, criticizes the liberties some scholars take when studying religion, stating that "'Religion' is not a native category. It is not a first-

person term of self-characterization. It is a category imposed from the outside on some aspect of native culture. It is the other, in these instances colonialists, who are solely responsible for the content of the term."[2] If, as Smith notably states, religion "is a term created by scholars for their intellectual purposes and therefore is theirs to define," why is Chinese religion continuously studied under parameters synonymous with (Christian) colonialists? The colonialist imposition of religion as category onto "native culture" dichotomized the truth and correctness of Christianity with the false and idolatrous beliefs and practices of the Chinese. Such was the result of Nineteenth Century missionaries writing on Chinese religion. The taxonomy of religions, of "-isms" prefixed by the names of charismatic founders, which orientalists ascribed to the religions of China and the subsequent comparison of these categories, remains the status quo. As a young scholar of Chinese religion I was told to be cautious of such constructed and imposed understandings of religion. Yet I was offered little alternative.

To assume that white colonialists both constructed and imposed "religious" classifications onto the preverbal other is reductionist and lends itself to do nothing but perpetuate an Orientalist dichotomy—removing agency, knowledge and power from the 'other' under question. Popular theories surrounding the nature of religion places scholars of China in a peculiar position. Robert Ford Campany's article *On the Very Idea of Religions* attempts to answer the existentialist predicament of the scholar of Chinese religion: "To what extent are these categories helpfully invoked in the study of specific non-Western

[2] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion,* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 179.

cultures and periods—for example, early medieval China?"[3] Campany's argument brings awareness to how language has dictated how we understand, define, and classify religion. Following his extensive study of the linguistic and metaphorical usages of "religion" as an entity in studies of medieval China, Campany explains, "to become aware of the peculiar shape and implications of our category 'religion' is to see more clearly the ways in which it implicitly shapes not only the answers to our historical and interpretive questions but the very form of those questions and, therefore, the form that any possible answer can take."[4] Campany concludes with a suggestion not to avoid talking about religion altogether, but rather to shift the way in which we speak about it. He explains,

> …if we are to go on speaking of religions, we should at least find new metaphors for doing so. If possible, the new metaphors should avoid picturing religions as really existent things in the world; as organisms; as hard-sided, clearly demarcated containers of people and things; and as agents, because picturing them in all these ways falsifies the actual state of things and skews our research questions in unfortunate ways. Religions do not exist, at least not in the same way that people and their textual and visual artifacts and performances do. And when religions are metaphorically imagined as doing things, it becomes harder to see the agents who really and nonmetaphorically do things: people.[5]

People—the obvious common denominator in all arenas of religious studies—make religion. A call for the inclusion of people and their actions within definitions and studies of Asian religions is growing within contemporary scholarship. Religious historian Thomas David DuBois writes "Religion is more than just ideas: it is ideas in action. Religion lives and

[3] Robert Ford Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions (In the Modern West and In Early Medieval China)," *History of Religions*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (2003), 288.
[4] Ibid., 290-291.
[5] Ibid., 319.

breathes in human society."[6] Anthropologist Adam Yuet Chau offers a similar insight when he says, "'religious traditions' themselves do not do things; it is people who do things with religious traditions."[7] Ian Reader and George Tanabe "treat religion as a matter not only of doctrine and belief but of participation, custom, ritual, action, practice and belonging."[8] Such definitions are a reaction to the Christian-centric constructs of religion that have dominated and continue to pervade scholarship. There is a resounding call to study religion through ritual—the people, material, and actions that constitute our classification of religion as such. In essence, I perceive this as a call to reevaluate how we define, situate, and recognize ritual. How we are to go about doing this involves resituating the sources we use and renegotiation how we use them.

1.1.2 Defining Ritual

If we acknowledge religion itself as a scholarly construct, then any study of religion becomes, in essence, as roundabout study of the scholar herself. And as Campany has noted above our embeddedness in this history confines (and defines) the very questions and answers we deal in. What, then, are we left with? Ritual, people, and the things people do are far harder to contest than the alleged religious beliefs and truths religions may claim to possess. In essence DuBois, Yuet Chau, Reader and Tanabe advocate for a ritual based study of Asian religions. An analysis of ritual, however, cannot be applied within scholarship as a solution to the conceptual problems and esoteric position that religion places us in. For ritual is a product of the same system. Perhaps the most outspoken scholar to take on the

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[6] Thomas David DuBois, *Religion and the Making of Modern East Asia*, (New York: Cambridge University press, 2011), 2.
[7] Adam Yuet Chau, Ed., *Religion in Contemporary China*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 3.
[8] Ian Reader and George Tanabe, *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 5-6.

issues of ritual was that of Catherine Bell,[9] who has critiqued the history of ritual within the academic field, noting that "The idea of ritual is itself a construction, that is, a category or tool of analysis built up from a sampling of ethnographic descriptions and the elevation of many untested assumptions; it has been pressed into service in an attempt to explain the roots of religion in human behavior in ways that are meaningful to Europeans and Americans of this century."[10]

The motivation behind Catherine Bell's extensive and renowned work on ritual was to present "a new framework in which to reconsider traditional questions about ritual."[11] In this framework Bell "abandon[s] the focus on ritual as a set of special practices in favor of a focus on some of the more common strategies of 'ritualization,' initially defined as a way of acting that differentiates some acts from others."[12] She, like many others, found fault in theories of ritual that perpetuate what she termed the "thought—action dichotomy," the situating of thought and knowledge in opposition or contrast to action and ritual. To circumvent the faults of dichotomous thinking, Bell purposed a "practice approach to ritual" where:

> First, ritual should be analyzed and understood in its real context, which is the full spectrum of ways of acting within any given culture, not as some a priori

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[9] My preference for the theory of Catherine Bell comes out of the careful consideration of other prominent ritual theorists such as Victor Turner, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, and Roland Grimes. While Turner and Smith were foundational in the area of ritual studies, I prefer to avoid the comparative religions approach that these theorists functioned within. I respect the work of Grimes and I am particularly interesting in his perspectives on sacred space and the body. However Grimes, like Turner and Smith, lack a more nuanced understanding of Chinese religion and Chinese ritual. I feel Bell's ritual theory more appropriately functions both conceptually and linguistically within the Chinese context, as her own research background was in Chinese religion. Her education and experience in the study of Chinese religion as well as her gender, I feel, offers a more appropriate perspective to the study of Chinese ritual that I pursue throughout this thesis.

[10] Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997),21

[11] Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 140.

[12] Ibid., xv.

> category of action totally independent from other forms of action… From this perspective, the focus is less a matter of clear and autonomous rites than the methods, traditions and strategies of "ritualization." Second, the most subtle and central quality of those actions we tend to call ritual is the primacy of the body moving about within a specially constructed space, simultaneously defining (imposing) and experiencing (receiving) the values ordering that environment.[13]

Bell's iconic *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* draws numerous references and examples from sinological, anthropological and sociological theorists and scholars. The range of theoretical perspectives on ritual that Bell reviews and criticizes come from the work of those who dealt (or deal) with specific groups of people or particular ritual activities. Bell's framework ideally gives us the means to study primary or first-hand encounters with ritual—to apply her logic of schemes and ritual mastery to direct interactions with ritual actors and ritualization, those people, places or things that constitute the world of ritual. Bell opens up new ways to read, interpret, and use the very sources that scholars depend upon to "learn" about or construct ritual.

The propagation of Bell's ritual theory, I believe, is key to a ritual-based or performance-based reading of the primary and secondary sources scholar use. Bell notes that the term "performance" has been used more recently within the field of religious studies in an attempt to minimize the thought—action dichotomy present in increasingly globalized constructs of religion and ritual. She explains,

> In the field of religious studies the language of performance is usually invoked to counter the scholarly tendency to approach religious activity as if it were either a type of scriptural text to be analyzed or the mere physical execution of a preexisting ideology….The goal has been an analytic

[13] Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 81-82.

> orientation truer to the nature of human activity, or at least one less patently reflective of the hermeneutical stance and agenda of the textual scholar.[14]

Recent applications of performance theory have been invoked to overcome the very scholarly tendencies that originated within colonialist encounters with Asia and within Protestant missionary accounts. As we shall see below these are tendencies to seek out scriptural validation while simultaneously, through textual comparison, assuming an air of universality.

1.1.3 Protestant Presuppositions

The issues raised by Gregory Schopen in *Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism* over two decades ago unfortunately still affect our study of religion today. These presuppositions continue to emerge within current scholarship on religion in modern China. Though Schopen's example pertains to Indian Buddhism, the imbedded Christocentric and Orientalist issues he is attempting to combat can still be found in the theory and methodology used by some scholars in the contemporary study of China. Schopen makes the case that the preference of claiming religious legitimacy and truth within textual source material versus archeological evidence has led to a misrepresentation of Indian Buddhism. His concluding remarks indicate what I believe to be a similar issue facing the study of ritual in China.

> It is possible that what was in origin a sixteenth-century Protestant polemical conception of where "true" religion is located has been so thoroughly absorbed into the Western intellectual tradition that its polemical and theological origins have been forgotten and that it is now taken too often entirely as a given. It is possible then, that it is this conception that has determined the history of the study of Indian Buddhism and that –as a consequence –our

[14] Catherine Bell, "Performance," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* ed. Mark C. Taylor, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1998): 206-207.

> picture of Indian Buddhism may reflect more of our own religious history and value than the history and value of Indian Buddhism.[15]

In his assessment of the Protestant Reformation (1517-1648), Schopen stresses how the reformers[16] created a divide between "what was actually occurring and what had been historically practiced. Given the nature of the case they were trying to advance they did not—more pointedly, could not—allow actual religious practice to have any meaningful place in defining the nature of 'true religion.'"[17]

Martin Luther's (1483-1546) revolutionary Ninety-Five Theses, as Lyndal Roper explains, "began from an Augustinian understanding of the nature of penance, and of human beings and all their actions as fundamentally sinful. Dour as this anthropology might seem, it was liberating for Luther, because if all our actions are inherently sinful then we cannot strive to reach perfection by doing works, such as fasting, saying prayers, or hearing masses."[18] Luther's theses demonstrated a clear criticism of the misplaced authority given to the efficacy of ritual, or acts of penance. The currents of his criticism against the practice of penance, of fasting and reciting prayer, against ritual, can be felt in Protestant accounts of foreign religion. Schopen illustrates that this logic has been inherited by our very own scholarly tradition to the point that the study of religion has by-and-large denied "actual practice a meaningful place in the definition of religion and the devaluation of any sources

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[15] Gregory Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," in *History of Religions*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1991), 22-23.
[16] Martin Luther (1483-1546), Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560), Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), and John Calvin (1509-1564).
[17] Schopen, 21.
[18] Lyndal Roper, "Martin Luther," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of The Reformation*, Peter Marshall ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 45.

that express it."[19] This subsequent devaluation of practice is precisely what Bell's theory attempts to avoid.

1.2 Old Sources, New Methods

In the wake of Schopen's work there has been a notable shift in how scholars of Chinese religion conceptualize and define both religion and ritual. Yet a methodological disconnect appears to remain. It seems one cannot be a scholar of Chinese religion without also being a historian. The most telling sign of this is the sources we use and methods in which we engage said sources. The pioneering sinologists and philologists of decades past utilized scriptures, texts, canons, imperial records and manuscripts to uncover the beliefs and theologies of Chinese Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism. While the contemporary scholar is, or should be, worrisome of appropriating "belief" within Chinese sources, we nonetheless continue our diversified studies of Chinese religion through textual and manuscript sources. The issue here is not the sources we use, but more so how we have gone about using them. Our methodology needs to match our motive. Shifting the focus of what we are attempting to gain from these sources comes in part with shifting how we actually use them. If the goal is to reveal ritual rather than, say, belief, we need to treat textual sources as material objects involved in the process of ritualization, rather than as an authoritative source of religious "truth."

1.2.1 Texts as Material

A growing number of scholars of Chinese religion, though still heavily reliant upon manuscript sources, now approach these sources with greater respect to the social

[19] Schopen, 21.

significance of their materiality. Chinese manuscript scholar Imre Galambos attributes this shift to Twenty-First Century advancements in database technology. As digital access to these documents has improved over time there is now, he says, "a growing awareness of the significance of the materiality of manuscripts, and there has been a shift from looking at texts devoid of physical form towards relying on the physical attributes of manuscripts as a means of gaining insights into how they were produced and what purpose they served in contemporary society."[20] Aside from the obviously religious significance of Buddhist manuscripts, Galambos' work with Dunhuang[21] texts is largely centered on their social significance as revealed through the specific material aspects of manuscripts themselves. The goal in attempting to know how texts were written, read, and produced is to learn more about the very people who wrote and used them. In focusing on the functionality and materiality of textual sources, pursuits such as Galambos' seek to view religion through people and their actions in order to contribute to a non-elite narrative of Chinese religion.

The relatively recent shift in how scholars now approach Chinese manuscript sources has much to do with the Twentieth Century discovery of the library cave at Dunhuang. Unique to this discovery was the amount of hand written, or hand copied texts

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[20] Imre Galambos, "New incarnations of old texts: Traces of a move to a new book form in medieval Chinese manuscripts," In Tōhōgaku kenkyū ronshū kankōkai 東方學研究論集刊行會, ed., *Takata Tokio kyōju taishoku kinen Tōhōgaku kenkyū ronshū* 高田時雄教授退職記念東方學研究論集. Kyoto: Rinsen shoten, 2014: 370.

[21] The city of Dunhuang 享煌巾 in northwestern Gansu Province 甘肅省 was once a hub along the Silk Road and is home to the Buddhist cave library, one of the greatest archeological discoveries of Chinese religious texts. "The cave had been sealed and hidden at the end of the first millennium AD and only re-discovered in 1900. Forty thousand manuscripts, paintings and printed documents on paper and silk were found in the cave itself. Tens of thousands more items were excavated from other Silk Road archaeological sites. These unique items have fascinating stories to tell of life on this great trade route from 100 BC to AD 1400." Retrieved from "About IDP," *International Dunhuang Project 國際敦煌項目*, Accessed May 19, 2017, http://idp.bl.uk/pages/about.a4d.

within the collection—despite their creation after the advent and advancement of printing in China at the time. James Robson, taking influence from the work of Catherine Bell, explains that the very fact that handwritten manuscripts continued to be produced in light of the growth of printing technology in China reveals information about the importance of ritual practice.[22] The fact that the practice of hand copying Buddhist texts continued is indicative of the ritual role and importance of merit making—an activity undertaken by both elite and non-elite members of society. Robson confesses, however, that "the majority of the texts discovered thus far are the products of elite circles. It has been much more difficult to gain access to premodern manuscripts related to popular forms of religious beliefs and practices."[23] Despite our theoretical awareness of the potential that manuscript, canonical, and textual sources hold, few are studied for their ritual and social insights. This is due in part, according to Robson, to a lack of scholarly access to the types of materials that non-elite members of society used. Robson argues that non-elite manuscripts like handwritten ritual manuals and family genealogies were rarely circulated widely or freely, and as a result our awareness of and access to them today is extremely limited.[24]

1.3 Connecting Missionary Accounts and Manuscript Methods

The methodology I apply within this thesis has taken inspiration from the above scholars and their work with manuscripts. I focus on the materiality of Christian missionary accounts in order to discover social and ritual knowledge. Within this thesis I frame

[22] James Robson, "Brushes with Some 'Dirty Truths': Handwritten Manuscripts and Religion in China," *History of Religions* No. 51, Vol. 4 (2012), 323.
[23] Ibid., 326.
[24] Ibid., 326-327.

missionary accounts as material objects in the sense that they are, and were, tools that missionaries and Western communities used to spread knowledge and ideology. As I will show throughout this thesis, examining the authorship, writing style and research methodology of these accounts reveals key information about the communities that read and circulated these writings. These sources possess a history of missionary and Chinese engagement and they provide detailed, first-hand descriptions of non-elite religious practice. By looking at the materiality of missionary accounts I reveal not only useful and new information about the practice of Chinese ritual, I also uncover insight into the gendered projection and reception of these sources and the narratives found therein.

1.3.2 Protestant Missionaries as the Problem and the Solution

The difficulty in uncovering depictions and examples of non-elite religious practice within manuscript study is what initially drew me to missionary writings. In the onset of my research I wanted to explore the Twenty-First Century interaction of popular tourism with peoples religious practice at Buddhist temples on Putuoshan 普陀山, one of China's sacred Buddhist mountains. I was struck with how difficult it is to study contemporary ritual practice in China. My own fieldwork on Putuoshan placed me face to face with the performance of ritual by people who seemingly had little knowledge of the very rituals they were performing. On my second visit to the island in 2014 I was struck by the amount of tour guides who brought large groups of Chinese tourists through the temples, instructing the group of young Chinese on how to light their incense sticks and properly bow and prostrate before the idols. I was confused by what I saw. Was this ritual? How do I classify

people who lack prior knowledge on how to perform these actions? This, as I have shown briefly above, has much to do with how both ritual and religion are defined.

In my attempt to figure out how to study contemporary ritual I was faced with the issue of *why* it was so tricky. I was quickly drawn to the writings of Christian missionaries, who appeared to have had similar perplexing experiences in their encounters with Chinese religion. As I read through these accounts I began to understand how Protestant presuppositions came to constrict how we think about both ritual and religion. I came into direct contact with the very Protestants at fault. It would be logical to see missionaries as part of the problem, not the solution. And yet, paradoxically, I found Protestant missionaries in China to be talking about and describing the very thing I wanted to study on Putuoshan: ritual. As I will show in the following chapters, the most notable missionaries working in China who published their journals and diaries paved the way for what soon became the academic study of Chinese religion. The Christian and Protestant biases of these early proto-scholars are embedded in their early theorizing on religion. However bleak these sources may initially seem, there is a way to overcome their bias, prejudice and racism.

In his book *Borrowed Gods, Foreign Bodies: Christian Missionaries Imagine Chinese Religion* Eric Reinders explains that the prejudice of missionaries towards Chinese people was largely rooted in missionaries' linguistic limitations. Without a shared language, the body became the main means for which missionaries learned about Chinese people and religion, simply because the body is more apparent and easily understood than the mind. Missionaries in China brought Chinese religion into Western consciousness. Despite the obvious motivational bias and orientalist ignorance of these authors, missionary writings

are an extremely powerful resource because of the blatant bodily observations they possess. Reinders breaks down the moral judgments, culturally constructed biases and perceived misunderstandings of missionary writings, and criticizes the impulse many scholars have had to edit out value judgments or overlook pertinent information.[25] To overcome this impulse is to understand the constraints of language. One of the most influential aspects of how missionaries wrote about China and all things Chinese was through a language completely disconnected from those they studied. As Reinders explains,

> …the absence of a shared language forces the foreigner and native to "know, savor, receive, and display" each others' bodies in a heightened way. Being forced to communicate without benefit of shared language draws attention to "messages" that have been communicated body to body already, under the radar of thought.[26]

In the particular case of missionaries in China, the body of the unknown other was used to fill the gaps. Reinders goes on to clarify that,

> [w]hile the rational mind of the Other may not be evident, their bodies apparently are. Bodies are more immediately perceivable to any foreigner fresh off the boat. This sense of immediacy is still a fantasy: the foreign body is *ultimately* no more and no less inscrutable than the mind. However, because bodies are *apparently* and *relatively* immediate to visual perception, representations of the human body become crucial depictions of the foreign, carry potent messages about the foreigner's culture.[27]

Recognizing mental acuity, rationality, and intellect in another culture begins with observing bodily appearance and then moves on to spoken communication and text. For Protestants, as Schopen has previous shown, rationality is evident in words and the perceived authority of text. Protestant missionaries anxiously sought truth and rationality

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[25] Eric Reinders, *Borrowed Gods and Foreign Bodies: Christian Missionaries Imagine Chinese Religion,* (Berkeley: University of California Press): 2004, 7.
[26] Ibid., 16.
[27] Ibid., 15.

in the others' ability to articulate the motives behind their actions. Many missionaries consciously or unconsciously assumed that evidence for intelligence and authority was found in the written word, in books, so missionaries looked for rationality in Chinese language and writing. What the following chapters reveal is that often the perceived rational explanations of religion found in Chinese texts contradicted what missionaries actually saw. Yet not all missionaries were driven to textual verification. The focus of some missionaries, most notably women, came to fall upon bodies, on physical actions, practices and rituals. Without being intimate with the current political or popular state of Buddhism or Chinese religion at the time, missionary authors depict ritual with blunt yet truthful descriptions.

Missionaries were instrumental in the perpetuation of Protestant presuppositions and contributed to the global translation, analysis and circulation of Chinese religious text—a method of study that would eventually become the academic model. However, there remains a genre of missionary writing that did not follow the method of textual scrutiny or linguistic analysis. Schopen, quoting the opinion of J. W. de Jong, reveals one reason why most missionary writing on Asian religion was not academically respected. "Their knowledge," de Jong claims, "was based upon what they observed, and on discussions with Buddhist priests, but very rarely on the study of Buddhist literature itself. For these reasons it must have been very difficult to gain a clear notion of the main Buddhist ideas. A religion like Buddhism which is based upon principles which are very different from the guiding principles of Christianity cannot be understood without a thorough study of its

scriptures."[28] Schopen includes this quotation as a means to demonstrate the prevalent assumptions that have driven Western scholarship—that real Buddhism is texted-based, only correctly understood through scriptural study, regardless of what Buddhist actually do or what priests actually say.[29] de Jong claims missionary accounts are deceptive in their usefulness for their lack of scriptural study and misplaced attention to what Buddhist were *actually doing* at the time. I argue that this is precisely where their value lies. Through their search for textual authority and enunciations of ideological similarities some Protestant missionary writings unwittingly contributed to the origins of the comparative study of religion. Yet many others, most notably writing produced by missionary women, offered something else—an unedited, historical snapshot of the ritual activities and social roles of Chinese religion on the ground.

1.4 Chapter Outline

In Chapter Two I introduce late Nineteenth Century Christian and Western narratives of Chinese religion as revealed through the published writings of a number of Protestant missionaries. These narratives, as I will show in the following chapters, have perpetuated conceptual divisions between *what* Chinese Buddhism is and *where* it is found. Yet a more detailed reading of these very writings also reveal contradictory information about lay Buddhists and their ritual practices. Chapter Two uncovers how Zhejiang province 浙江省, and South East China more generally, has been historicized as the

[28] J. W. de Jong, *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America* 2nd rev. ed. (Delhi, 1987), quoted in Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," *History of Religions* 31 (1991), 14-15.
[29] Schopen, 15.

cultural—and consequentially religious—centre of China. First I introduce the coastal significance of Zhejiang province as a point of trade both past and present. Following this, a number of missionaries are introduced. I then discuss the similar themes and perspectives on Chinese religion to come from each of the missionary accounts examined. These missionary accounts project an institutional structure onto Buddhism, and then frame this institution as being in a state of decline. Monasteries and the clergy who inhabit them are described as failing, in physical and moral disrepair. By contrast, these same missionary accounts present the daily religious activities of the lay Buddhism community as active and colourful, supported largely by the patronage of women.

Chapter Three highlights missionary narratives of Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist experiences at Wutaishan 五臺山. In the beginning of this chapter I frame the history of trade and travel in the province of Shanxi 山西省, noting its contrasts to Zhejiang. I then introduce additional missionaries who visited or worked in this area. Again the common themes between these writings are discussed. This chapter uncovers how missionaries discussed Chinese Buddhism in this area, and how they framed it in contrast to depictions of Buddhism found elsewhere. These missionaries demonstrate an awareness of both ethnic and ritual diversity taking place at Wutaishan. What the missionary accounts examined in this chapter reveal is the overwhelming patronage of Mongolians to this site.

In Chapter Four I shift my gaze away from the stories these missionaries tell to examine both the theological and material similarities the texts themselves possess—I focus on the authorship, structure, footnotes, and publication information of these materials. I introduce the role and significance of missionary women and their writing and

discuss how conceptual and academic preferences suppressed the lived experiences of missionary women and denied them an authoritative voice. I then trace both how and where Protestant ideology and notions of religious truth were forged and perpetuated within missionary scholarship. Then, by exploring the physical structure and style of missionary writings, I show how certain forms and authors found academic precedence and authority over others.

This thesis concludes by revealing how early Protestant theological presuppositions about ritual shaped missionary perspectives of Chinese religion. And in turn how these presuppositions positioned empirical textual analysis over experience as the voice of religious authority. This Protestant theology, I argue, has also had a lasting impact on the academic study of ritual within Chinese religion. By incorporating missionary writings into pre-existing methods of study, the socio-historical role of missionaries within China's religious history is uncovered. Through an improved contextualization of these sources, we can better understand the social and cultural significance of ritual activities within premodern China, and ideally contribute to a history of Chinese religion that includes women and their voices.

Chapter Two

Missionary Depictions of Chinese Religion: Zhejiang Province 浙江省 and Putuoshan 普陀山

In this chapter I introduce late Nineteenth Century narratives of Chinese religion as revealed through the published writings of a number of Protestant missionaries. These narratives have perpetuated conceptual divisions between *what* Chinese Buddhism is and *where* it is found. Yet a more detailed reading of these very writings also reveals contradictory information about lay Buddhists and their ritual practices. Missionaries depict Chinese Buddhism as institutionally failing, while simultaneously describing the vibrant and active ritual practices of the lay community itself. This contradiction reveals the obvious conceptual disconnect missionaries carried between what they thought ordained and lay Buddhists should be doing and what they actually did. This point is highlighted by the simple fact that missionaries tell us women constituted the majority of practicing lay Buddhists. In light of the detailed ritual descriptions of women, Buddhism is still presented to the reader as an antiquated, idiotic, and failing religion in China at the time. The benefit of reading and analyzing these missionary accounts is twofold. First, they contain ritual history, the physical descriptions and narratives of religious activities within the non-elite realm. Second, they reveal why and how missionaries constructed and contributed to the colonialist and orientalist narratives of China and Chinese religion that went on to permeate Western scholarship.

2.1 Zhejiang Province

2.1.1 Zhejiang Past and Present

Zhejiang, today, is an epicenter of Chinese religion and culture. The eastern coastal province is home to the vibrant cities of Ningbo 寧波 and Hangzhou 杭州, both known for their natural beauty and grand sacred relics.[1] A little over one hundred kilometers off the coast of Ningbo resides the small island of Putuoshan, one of many small islands that make up the Zhoushan 舟山 archipelago. Like its neighbouring mainland cities, Putuoshan is home to beautiful scenic landscapes and is the acclaimed mountain home of the Bodhisattva Guanyin 觀音菩薩.[2] This region of China is intriguing. Sweeping monastic compounds are scattered across Zhejiang's lush mountainous landscape. Today, religious sites in Zhejiang are a major component of China's multi-billion dollar tourism industry. In 2015 the

[1] Ningbo, one of China's oldest cities, lays claim to the country's oldest surviving library at Tianyi Pavilion 天一阁 as well as one of the oldest wooden temple structures, Baoguo Temple 保国寺. Hangzhou's famous West Lake, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, encompasses many of the city's historic scenic and religious sites including Lingyin Temple 靈隱寺 and Leifeng Pagoda 雷峰塔 among many others. The region is also well known for its production of green tea and other cultural material. China's National Tea Museum 中国茶叶博物馆 and National Silk Museum 中国丝绸博物馆 are located in Hangzhou.

[2] Putuoshan (East) itself is one of Chinese Buddhism's four sacred mountains, along with Wutaishan 五台山(North), Emeishan 峨嵋山 (West) and Jiuhua 九华山(South). Each is the mountain home of a bodhisattva, and each a well-known pilgrimage site and center of Buddhist religious practice. Today the most popular and frequented of the four is arguable Putuoshan. This is due to a number of factors, one of which is the centrality of Guanyin. Guanyin is not only a central figure within Chinese Buddhism, but is also the patron deity of Putuoshan. As a bodhisattva, an enlightened being who remains in contact with the realm of sentient beings, s/he offers compassion and mercy to those who sincerely call upon her/him. The name Guanyin, more formally Guanshiyin 觀世音 , means "observing the cries of the world" and is a translation of the Sanskrit Avalokiteśvara. The compassionate nature of Guanyin's interactions with those who worship her/him is tied to the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*. The *Lotus Sūtra* and the chapter dedicated to the description of Guanyin is *the* source of information and ritual guideline for the Chinese Buddhist worship of her. The *Lotus Sūtra* makes it clear that for anyone who recites the name of Guanyin with a sincere mind, *yixin* 一心, Guanyin "shall straightaway heed their voices, and all shall gain deliverance." See: *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (The Lotus Sutra)*, trans. by Leon Hurvitz, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

province drew in 525 million domestic tourists and over 10 million foreign, resulting in revenue well over RMB600 billion.[3]

These numbers are impressive, considering popular tourism within China has only existed since the early 1980s. Over the last thirty years Putuoshan has becomes one of the region's most famous tourist attractions. Though only a mere 77 square kilometers in size,[4] Putuoshan itself hosts over five million visitors every year.[5] Modern amenities like hotels, restaurants, and paved roads cover the narrow hillsides. Yet Putuoshan's success is relatively short lived compared to other, older, religious tourist sites within China.

Established as a Buddhist sanctuary in the Eighth Century, the popularity of Putuoshan as a sacred site has fluctuated over its twelve hundred year history. Devout lay Buddhist, monastics, and pilgrims are known to have patronized the island. Its coastal location has been advantageous to the variety of roles the island has held.[6] Recent scholarship by Marcus Bingenheimer reveals that the island housed a military base and has played a significant role in protecting China's eastern coast against trade interference from

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[3] *Zhejiang: Market Profile*, Hong Kong Trade Development Council, published online 23 Nov 2016, retrieved January 31, 2017 from http://china-trade-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/Facts-and-Figures/Zhejiang-Market-Profile/ff/en/1/1X000000/1X06BVYH.htm

[4] Susan Naquin and Chün-Fang Yü, *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 202.

[5] Cora Un In Wong, Alison McIntosh, Chris Ryan, "Buddhism and Tourism: Perceptions of the Monastic Community at Pu-tuo-shan, China," *Annals of Tourism Research* 40 (2013): 217.

[6] Chün-Fang Yü, "P'u-t'o Shan: Pilgrimage and the Creation of the Chinese Potalaka" in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, eds. Susan Naquin and Chun-Fang Yu, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 202, 212. Yu notes that the island's location within prominent trade routes brought the patronage of foreign Buddhist travelers. It also had a history of unfortunate encounters with pirates, resistant military forces and even the Dutch. This island sat at the crossroads between northern and southern Chinese supply routes, as well as the dominant trade route to and from Japan.

Japanese and other foreign "pirates."[7] It wasn't until Christian missionaries visited Putuoshan in the Nineteenth Century however, that the island was perceived as a place of leisure. And yet, this small island appears today to be a beacon of Chinese Buddhism and a physical representation of Chinese modernity and success.[8]

2.1.2 Missionary and Colonial Presence

In order to understand the significance of missionaries' presence on Putuoshan, and their subsequent opinions of the area, it is worth discussing the geographic significance of Zhejiang as a coastal province. This simple fact is one obvious reason for the region's historic economic success. China's port cities were made great by trade and they remain powerful today because of that what industry now represents. Ningbo was and remains one of China's most active port cities and has a long history as a centre of trade and a point of cultural interaction. This history is long and encompasses interaction with diverse people, cultures, and nations. In the interest of this thesis, 1842 and the years shortly following are of particular importance. It was at this time that American Protestants were able to establish missions within Zhejiang.

The Treaty of Nanjing 南京條約, signed in August of 1842, ended the First Opium War and gave Britain access to the five Chinese ports they had been longing for, Guangzhou 廣州(formerly Romanized as Canton), Fuzhou 福州, Xiamen 廈門, Ningbo, and Shanghai 上

[7] Marcus Bingenheimer, "The General and the Bodhisattva: Commander Huo Jigao Travels to Mount Putuo," in *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 29 (2016): 129-161.
[8] The economic success of Putuoshan, and many other domestic tourist attractions, is due to the recent growth of a Chinese middle class. This demographic embodies Chinese modernity. The middle class now possesses the financial and social freedom to participate in travel and leisure, a freedom that has been made possible by the county's relatively recent economic success.

海.[9] This was a monumental moment in Chinese history. Aside from giving Britain a strong foothold in Chinese trade and commerce, the opening up of foreign access to more Chinese cities gave British and North America Christian missionaries the opportunity to legally construct Protestant churches and hospitals.[10] Though Catholic and Jesuit missionaries had arrived in China a few centuries prior, Protestant missions did not flourish until the Nineteenth Century. These ports, Ningbo and Shanghai in particular, became the central headquarters for foreign mission societies and were the first point of contact for many Christian missionaries.

Prior to the Treaty of Nanjing and even more so after, Zhejiang was an epicenter of pilgrimage, travel, tourism, and trade. In her essay *P'u-t'o Shan: Pilgrimage and the Creation of the Chinese Potalaka*, Chün-Fang Yü explains that "the emergence of P'u-t'o[sic] was very much connected with the emergence of Ningpo[sic] as a national and international trading center."[11] The construction of the Grand Canal connected trade routes to the east coast while improvements in navigational technology during the Sui 隋(581-618) and Tang 唐 (618-907) dynasties improved trade in and around Ningbo, eventually connecting the city by river to more inland ports like Hangzhou. Yü explains that, consequentially, during this span of time Putuoshan grew to be a point of not only international trade but also pilgrimage for Buddhist from inside and outside China.

In the Nineteenth Century Ningbo was a point of first contact for many American and British missionaries. The people of Zhejiang, their language, and their religion are

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[9] Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China,* New York: W.W. Norton & Co. (1990): 159.
[10] Ibid., 161. Two years later, in 1844, the United States negotiated a similar treaty to that of the British. This treaty allowed Americans to construct churches within the five port cities and lifted restrictions placed on foreigners learning Chinese language.
[11] Yü, "P'u-t'o Shan: Pilgrimage and the Creation of the Chinese Potalaka," 202.

presented within missionary accounts as the quintessential model of Chinese culture and identity. My discussion below will show how Chinese religion was perceived and described by various Western missionaries. These writings exemplify the origins of Protestant presuppositions in the study of Chinese religion. Yet, conversely I will show how, through a recontextualized reading, these sources also offer a clear glimpse into non-elite ritual practice. Missionary accounts like the ones explored within this chapter offer us a precise, honest, and unedited depiction of religious life in Nineteenth Century China. They tell us about the religious lives and practices of the men and women of the lay Buddhist community. Depictions of what laywomen were actually doing in the Nineteenth Century are essentially absent from "traditional" Chinese sources. Herein lies the undeniable usefulness of missionary accounts.

2.2 Meet the Missionaries

The missionaries I introduce below are a small representation of those who lived and worked in Zhejiang during the mid to late Nineteenth Century. By 1900, there were 209 American Presbyterian missionaries in China, 92 organized churches, over 11,000 communicants, numerous schools and hospitals, and two printing presses.[12] I have chosen to examine the following individuals firstly because they published (English language) accounts of their travels in China. Second, my examination is limited to accounts that have been digitized and made available through online databases.[13] Third, I have chosen

[12] Michael C. Coleman, "Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes Towards China and the Chinese, 1837-1900," *Journal of Presbyterian History,* Vol. 56 No.3 (1978), 186.
[13] Most of the accounts I reference have been retrieved online from the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) Historical Monographs Collection.

accounts that contain explicit information or opinions about Chinese religion. Lastly, each missionary I include below traveled to Putuoshan and spent significant time in Zhejiang province where they lived, worked or missionized.[14]

American Presbyterians Helen Nevius (1833-1910) and her husband, Rev. John Nevius (1829-1893), left Boston harbor in September of 1853 on a ship destined for the mysterious shores of China.[15] The husband and wife duo worked to establish missions in both Ningbo and Hangzhou, and on two occasions vacationed on the small, secluded island of Putuoshan. Though driven by the same purpose, each author takes a varying and personal approach to his or her study and writing on their time in China. In *Our Life in China* Helen Nevius journals the experiences she underwent while traveling and living abroad. Her work in establishing missionary schools and church organizations had her on the ground, working face to face with other women. She gives an intimate voice to Chinese women and highlights the practice of Chinese religion on a common and localized level.

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[14] This is by no means the extent of missionary writings about this part of China, nor does this sample represent the true number of missionaries who lived in Zhejiang and visited Putuoshan at the time. The selection of accounts I examine in this thesis are first and foremost limited only to those who present information about two specific Buddhist sites, Putuoshan and Wutaishan. There are a number of English language accounts that reference Putuoshan that I have chosen not to include mostly due to the length restrictions of this thesis, these include Robert Fortune (1847), Karl Gützlaff (1834), Évariste Huc (1855), Archibald Little (1910), and Walter Medhurst (1842). I am aware that the criterion I have used to select these sources limits me. Other Western or European accounts of Putuoshan likely exist but fall out of scope because they are not digitized and/or are not written in English. I am aware of both French and German accounts, however my linguistic limitations prevent me from referencing them here properly and appropriately. I have also limited my search to a narrow period of time. I do not include Protestant writings published earlier than 1830 or after 1911. It should also be clarified that this period of time largely excludes Catholic accounts. Though numerous Catholic accounts do exists they precede this time period as Catholic (Jesuit) missionaries entered China three centuries earlier, however by the Nineteenth Century their presence, largely due to political reasons, was greatly overshadowed by the Protestants. It was Protestant nations that negotiated treaties allowing their missionaries entrance inland and across China's port cities.

[15] Helen Nevius, *Our Life in China,* (New York: Robert Carter and Brother, 1869), 8, 28.

In stark contrast John Nevius' *China and the Chinese* is a formal introduction into Chinese political, social, and religious structure. His writing gives an overview of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. Precedence is given to the institutional and doctrinal aspects of Chinese religion, and heavy focus is placed on language, education, history, literature, national festivals and customs. John Nevius brings current political events into discussion with Western ideologies. His formal education at Princeton Theological Seminary positioned him with the tools and methodologies needed to undergo such a study of Chinese religion. The formal theological education he and his male ordained Protestant counterparts received, no doubt, shaped how they defined and studied Chinese religion.

William A.P. Martin (1827-1916), the son of a Presbyterian preacher, graduated from New Albany Theological School in 1849, married his wife Jan VanSant, and ten days later on November 23, 1849 sailed to China.[16] Martin's *The Cycle of Cathay* gives detailed descriptions of the places and events he encountered in his travels across China. During his sixty years in China Martin spent a significant amount of time in Beijing 北京, and as a result his writing has a strong political and philosophical influence. He is well known for his involvement in China's political history. He was known to have "participated actively in the American delegation that produced the Treaty of Tientsin [Tianjin], the second of the unequal treaties between China and the Western powers, which opened up the entire country to traders, diplomats, and missionaries."[17] Martin's missionizing took the back seat to his political involvement and in 1869 when he became principal of the School of

[16] Ralph R. Covell, "The Legacy of W. A. P. Martin," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* Vol. 17 No. 1 (1993), 28.
[17] Ibid.

Combined Learning (*Tongwen Guan* 同文館), and later became increasingly involved in the development of China's changing educational system.[18]

Rev. Michael Simpson Culbertson (1819-1862) gives an overview and introduction into the history and formal structure of Chinese religion in his book *Darkness in the Flowery Land.* Born in Pennsylvanian, Culbertson graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary before traveling to China where he was stationed in both Ningbo and Shanghai between 1845 and 1862.[19] Throughout his writing on Chinese religion, Culbertson explores the wide variety of religious activity, superstitions, gods, customs and organizations found in Zhejiang at the time. His goal in doing so was to "promote the work of missions among the Chinese, by presenting such information as is calculated to awaken a deeper interest in their behalf among those whose duty it is to send them the Gospel."[20] Culbertson worked for six years in Ningbo and eventually established the first Presbyterian Church in China, of which he became the pastor.[21]

Again, another American Protestant offers a detailed depiction Chinese religion in Zhejiang. Rev. Hampden C. Dubose (1845-1910), like those mentioned above, was an American Presbyterian. He was born in South Carolina and went on to graduate from Columbia Theological Seminary before settling with his wife, Pauline, in Suzhou 蘇州 in

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[18] Ibid., 28-29.
[19] "The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Cyclopedia" Retrieved May 25, 2015. http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?t1=C&word=CULBERTSON.MICHAELSIMPSON
[20] Michael Simpson Culbertson *Darkness in the Flowery Land*, New York: Charles Scribner, (1857), xii.
[21] *The Centennial Memorial of the Presbyterian Carlisle,* Harrisburg: Myers Printing and Publishing House: (1889), 434-435.

1872.[22] His work *The Dragon, Image, and Demon or The Three Religions of China* came from the overwhelming success of his lectures given at over one hundred churches in the United States following his return home in 1882.[23] The book takes a broad look at the religious systems Dubose encounters across China, including imperial sacrifice in Beijing, ancestor worship, Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. His exploration is incredibly vast, yet oddly detailed. In the preface of his work, Dubose states "many of the best thoughts in this volume are obtained from the writings of Edkins, Eitel, Legge, and Beal; also from general works on China, missionary journals, and other sources."[24] Dubose's reference to the scholarship of European sinologists is quite intriguing. The significance of his reference—and similar references found elsewhere in American Presbyterian publications—will be discussed more thoroughly in the following chapters. At this juncture I do want to make clear that missionaries who published at this period of time were obviously engaging with each other's writing. In reading these works I have discovered a number of shared themes that I believe come from not only an engagement with each other's work, but also from a shared educations background, with roots in British and American theological seminary schools.

The writing of these missionaries is similar first and foremost in content. Every one of these authors spent time in Zhejiang province and visited the island of Putuoshan, and every one of them comments to some extent on Chinese religion. Helen Nevius, John Nevius, Martin, Culbertson and Dubose each brought a Protestant American idealism with them to

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[22] G Thompson Brown, "Hampden Coit Dubose" in the *Biographical Diction of Chinese Christianity*, (2004-2014). Retrieved January 30, 2017 from http://www.bdcconline.net/en/stories/d/dubose-hampden-coit.php

[23] Hampden Dubose, *The Dragon, Image, and Demon or The Three Religions of China*, New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, (1887): 7.

[24] Dubose, 7.

China, the undercurrents of which can be seen within their writing. All of them, except Helen Nevius, had a formal Presbyterian theological education. It has been argued elsewhere that "Princeton Theology, the ascendant theology of Old School Presbyterianism during the period," was foundational in the form of proselytization that took root in this area of China.[25] Michael Coleman describes this core theology as a forceful "insistence on the depravity of unconverted men, and on his inability to save himself but by accepting Christ," made all the more real through missionary perceptions of "the darkness of heathenism in contrast to the light of the Gospel."[26] This imagery of dark heathenism in contrast to the light of the Gospel is evident throughout missionary narratives on Chinese religion.

2.3 Missionary Sketches of Putuoshan and Chinese Buddhism in Zhejiang

Chinese religion is most commonly depicted within missionary writings as morally and physically decrepit. A blatant contempt for Chinese religion is clear within the writings of Helen and John Nevius, Martin, Culbertson and Dubose. Chinese religion was idolatrous and the Chinese individual was misguided. Less easily revealed, but none-the-less present, is respect. The missionary accounts I present below share a common perspective on the people and places that constitute Chinese Buddhism—what I call a Protestant narrative of Chinese religion. Why and how they came to hold such opinions is the topic of discussion in the following chapters. Here, however I want to provide a sketch of this narrative through select examples.

[25] Coleman, 186.
[26] Coleman, 186-7.

2.3.1 Buddhism as Failing

In her first impression of Putuoshan Helen Nevius writes that "it is more than eight hundred years since this island was first devoted to religious purposes; and some of the buildings were constructed at that time. Others again are of much more recent date, but all, even the newest, have a dilapidated, faded appearance, which indicates a great falling off in resources."[27] Her colleagues reiterate a similar description of the physical state of the island's infrastructure. Culbertson, who visited the island previous to Helen Nevius, critiques the current state of the island as in that of disrepair. Following Putuoshan's initiation as the home of Guanyin, he explains that:

> The island soon became famous. Pilgrimages were made to its shrines. Large and costly temples were built. The priests flocked to its altars, and the emperors themselves were impressed with the highest veneration for the place. The whole island was granted to the priests, and parts also of neighbouring islands. Many presents have been received from the emperors at various times. Sometimes it has been a costly temple, sometimes a magnificent idol, and again a large stone tablet, with an appropriate inscription inscribed upon it.
>
> But now the glory has departed. Most of the temples are sadly out of repair, and some of them lie in ruins. For more than a hundred years no presents have come from the Emperor—no supplies from the imperial treasury. The number of priests, once perhaps reaching three thousand, now hardly reaches three hundred. More than a hundred temples, large and small, still occupy its hills and valleys, but many of them are empty and in ruins.[28]

Similarly, Martin recounts a visit he made to one of the great temples on the island (though not noteworthy enough to name) and describes how the monastery "contains a hall of great height, resting on pillars wreathed with dragons. These, the priests told us, were taken from the Palace of the Nine Dragons, at Nanking [Nanjing], being sent as a pious

[27] Nevius, Helen, 46.
[28] Culbertson, 97-98.

offering by the emperor Yunglo [(Yongle 永樂, r. 1402-1424)] when he removed his court to the North, nearly five hundred years ago."[29] Helen Nevius also notes the island's history of imperial patronage and describes large marble tablets gifted by Emperor Kangxi 康熙, (r. 1661-1722) over a century earlier.[30] We are made aware by atheseauthors that the prestige of the past is no longer felt here.

It is a common theme throughout missionary writings to perceive the decline and disrepair of religious buildings, temples, or shrines as the result of a flawed religious system. The perceived past glory and current ruin and neglect of Putuoshan is indicative of a very Protestant notion of "religion." These sources show that, at this time, imperial support for the Buddhist island had obviously diminished. It is alluded to that government neglect is a result of an overall decline in Buddhist patronage, made evident by the low number of resident monastics. Unbeknown to the missionaries at the time, is that Putuoshan has a long history of prosperity and abandonment, and of rising and falling imperial support.

Shifting dynastic power and coastal threats to dynastic sovereignty forced the government-sanctioned removal of the island's monastic community in both the Fourteenth and Seventeenth century.[31] It is very likely that the costal turmoil of the Nineteenth Century Opium Wars had similar ramifications to the sate of religious life on Putuoshan. However, missionaries' claims of Buddhism's physical decline are perhaps predestined, so to speak, by Protestant presuppositions. Eric Reinders explains that during the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, "[t]he study of what was worthy in Chinese religion was for many

[29] William A. P. Martin, *The Cycle of Cathay,* New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, (1900), 119.
[30] Nevius, Helen, 46.
[31] Bingenheimer, 132-133.

years almost entirely a textual matter. Disparities between the ideas of the classical texts and observed practices in Chinese temples were explained as degradation."[32]

2.3.2 Monastic Mindlessness

The disparity between what missionaries thought to be authentic representations of Chinese religion and what they actually experienced is more vividly illustrated in descriptions of religious adherents. Most notably this disparity is evident in how missionaries perceived the role of Buddhist clergy. Lack of attention to, or even knowledge of sacred text was, in the eyes of the missionary, one of Buddhism's most grievous faults. Missionaries were aware of Chinese Buddhism's connection to its Indian origins and their Christian disposition towards textual study encouraged them to explore the texts they encountered in Buddhist temple libraries. Culbertson discovers that the temple prayers performed on Putuoshan were in Pali, and that a poor attempt had been made by the monks to express the sounds through Chinese language, which resulted in "unintelligible jargon…which nobody can understand."[33]

Dubose notes that the income of resident clergy on Putuoshan came from collecting fees for rituals and services provided to visiting worshippers. Yet despite their ritual service, overall the "priests are an idle, listless class" who pay no attention to the volumes of texts housed within the monastery.[34] Martin goes so far as to blame the failure of Buddhism on the illiteracy of the clergy. "In general," he writes, "the priests have stolid faces and eyes fixed on vacancy. Most of them are unable to read, the recitation of prayers being their sole

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[32] Eric Reinders, *Borrowed Gods and Foreign Bodies: Christian Missionaries Imagine Chinese Religion,* Berkeley: University of California Press, (2004), 33.
[33] Culbertson, 102.
[34] Dubose, 277.

duty. No longer doing anything to strengthen or renovate Chinese society, Buddhism clings to it as ivy clings to a crumbling tower…"[35]

A lack of textual focus or understanding on the part of the monk was seen to come from their overall lazy disposition. Helen Nevius perceives the decrepit sate of Putuoshan's temples to be a result of the resident monastics' incompetence. She explains "[t]here are numerous other buildings [on the island], -some used as temples for the idols, and some as sleeping places for the lazy stupid priests, who doze away their lives in this pretty retreat. Had they any spark of energy or ambition, they would make some effort to rescue these buildings from the decay and ruin in which we now find them."[36] Culbertson also takes issue with the lifestyle of the Buddhist priests on Putuoshan and is very judgmental of their asceticism. He describes a recluse priest living in a cavernous cell in "Tsz-choch-ling"[sic], which he translates as 'Dark-colored Bamboo Gove":

> His cell is some ten or twelve feet square. On one side is a shrine, in which is placed an image of Buddha. On the opposite side is another shrine, with curtains. This is for the monk himself. Here he seats himself, with his legs crossed, his clasped hands resting upon his thighs, and his eyes closed. He looks as much as may be like the senseless image on the opposite side of his cell…
>
> He has nothing to do but repeat the name O-mi-tò-fúh, burn incense before the idol, and offer prayers… His idiotic look indicates that he has succeeded in debasing his intellect, so as to reduce himself well nigh to a level with the brutes, and his sickly complexion and ghastly expression of countenance, although he is still young, seem to foreshadow a speedy entrance into that world in which he expects to realize the nonentity to which he aspires. Miserable man! how great his disappointment then, when all his hopes shall perish![37]

[35] Martin, 38.
[36] Nevius, Helen, 47.
[37] Culberson, 78-79.

Missionary opinions of religious officials, priests, and monastics are, more often than not, quite scathing. Criticism is constant. This may be for a number of reasons. Most obviously, there is assumed authority in these positions of religious leadership—along with the assumption that religious authority comes with doctrinal knowledge. Protestant ministers hold theological degrees and are knowledgeable in the teachings, morals, and ideologies of their faith—all of which are dictated by God and known to them through His written word. It is no far stretch then to assume that missionaries expected something similar from Chinese religious leaders. The criticism that Buddhist priests did not read their foundational texts, let alone could read, is a reoccurring theme in Nineteenth Century missionary commentary.

2.3.3 Women

It seems that no one was spared from the slander and judgment of missionaries. The lay community, the elderly, women and children, are included in commentaries on the perils of Chinese religious life. What I have discovered, however, is that comment on the lay community often comes with a far more sympathetic tone. One very sympathetic voice is that of Helen Nevius. I was initially drawn to her diary because of her gender. It is rare for scholars and historians of China and Chinese religion to engage with feminine voices. Her diary not only contributes to a Christian female narrative, it also creates a space where stories and images of Chinese women can be shared. One of the most striking similarities in all of the missionary accounts I have read is the frequent commentary on the religious roles of women. This is something that Helen Nevius, and other female authors like her,[38] seem to

[38] I have uncovered many published works by missionary wives and missionary women who lived and worked in China. Publications written by women are about the lives and work of missionary

be quite perceptive to. The significance of female authorship at this time has ties to rising feminist and women's rights movements in both China and abroad. Attention to and a closer examination of these sources is something that I more thoroughly advocate for in the last chapter of this thesis. At this point, I want to show how missionaries, both men and women, constructed images of Chinese women.

While support for Buddhism and its practice were, according to these missionaries, failing, Helen Nevius and her Protestant counterparts note the strong presence of women within sacred spaces, particularly Buddhist temples. Nevius writes:

> Women in China, as elsewhere, are more religiously disposed than are men, and constitute, by far, the largest proportion of worshippers usually seen in Buddhist temples. Most of them are somewhat advanced in years. The more active duties and enjoyments of life are past, and the future, with its dread uncertainties, forces itself upon their attention.[39]

Culbertson reiterates a similar sentiment, observing that the Great Halls of popular Buddhist monasteries are sometimes filled with worshippers, many of them women, who are "earnestly engaged in repeating over the name of Buddha in the usual sing-song tone….One reason of the earnestness of the women, perhaps, is their fear that when they die they may again be born into the world as women, a fate they are anxious to avoid."[40] Dubose is of a similar opinion. In the introduction on his chapter on women in Buddhism, he writes "[t]he women of Christian lands, outside the home circle, have three leading sources of pleasure, namely education, society, and religion. In China, as ignorance takes the

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women, mission histories, and the growth of Christian communities. For a general overview of the variety of these writings see: Anderson, Emma (1920); Barnes, Irene (1896); Bridgman, Eliza (1853); Duncan, Annie (1902); Guinness, Geraldine (1889); Williamson, Isabelle (1884).

[39] Nevius, Helen, 55.

[40] Culbertson, 109.

place of the first and seclusion of the second, the only spring of happiness which is available to the benighted daughters of Sinim [China] is religion."[41]

Dubose, like his fellow colleges, is sympathetic to the plight of Chinese women. He perceives women to be the majority of Buddhist worshippers, for, unlike men, they are not "subjected to the temptations of the great world."[42] John Nevius believes that "older women having comparatively little to do, and reminded by their age of the necessity of preparing for a future state, spend much of their time in the temples."[43] He goes on to criticize China for placing women within such an inferior station. Their bitterness is what drives them to seek better rebirth in the next life. Men are rarely seen making prostrations to the Buddha, but when they do it is for gains in their present life.

2.4 Missionary Impression of Chinese Religion and Chinese Identity

2.4.1 The Three teachings 三教 (*san jiao)*

The authors and quotations I have discussed above are a small representation of the wealth of publications produced by missionaries in China. Though I have only discussed five individuals at length here, I suggest that they represent the common themes and perspectives that are prominent throughout most missionary accounts from Zhejiang province at this time. I have already introduced three of these themes, the perceived practical and physical decline of Buddhism, the criticism of monastic illiteracy and ignorance, and the prominent ritual practice of women. There is one more theme I want to

[41] Dubose, 283.
[42] Dubose, 283.
[43] John Nevius, *China and the Chinese,* Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, (1882), 103.

introduce. It is the overall impression of Chinese religion as a triad of differentiated, yet congruent ideologies.

The missionary accounts I have discussed here all perpetuate the notion that Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism are used in tandem by the Chinese to satisfy and overcome moral and cosmological needs. Martin explains this sentiment in the following statement:

> Logically the three are irreconcilable, the Taoist being materialism, the Buddhist idealism, and the Confucian essentially ethical. Yet the people, like the state, make of them a unit by swallowing portions of each. In ordinary their lives are regulated by Confucian forms, in sickness they call in Taoist priests…and at funerals they have Buddhist priests…Besides the women and the priesthood the two sects last named have very few professed adherents, though the whole nations is more or less tinged by them.[44]

Perhaps if women were considered valuable their obvious and overwhelming existence in temples and shrines would make them "professed adherents." And perhaps the dominance of women in Buddhist temples at this time is in fact proof of Buddhism's strength and continuity, regardless of institutional decline.

John Nevius is of the opinion that divisions between the three religions may have been more useful in the past. "These systems," he explains, "are not regulated as rival and antagonistic, but co-ordinate and supplementary, and the people make use of them together, giving to each more or less importance or prominence, according to their preferences or fancies… the three systems have become modified and intertwined in their mutual acting and reacting upon each other…"[45] That said, he still resorts to breaking down

[44] Martin, 289.
[45] Nevius, John, 79-80.

his own presentation of Chinese religion into separate categories.[46] A similar sentiment is present in Culbertson's account. Culbertson believes that denominational divides do not exist in China like they do in Christian nations, and even suggests that people willfully embrace and participate in rites for all three religious without an awareness of the contradictions their actions imply.[47]

Culbertson's opinion, while obviously ignorant, alludes to dominant discourses on Chinese identity circulating within Western writing at this time. As I have shown above, missionaries were highly critical of the monastic community, of religious leaders, and of lay adherents. Despite criticism, all the missionaries I have discussed here assume that the religions they describe, the rituals they witness and the temples they visit are quintessentially "Chinese". These missionaries constructed their own descriptions and criteria in order to classify Chinese religion and Chinese Buddhism. Despite or in light of the textual authority and scriptural bias missionaries applied in defining Chinese religion, missionaries also present a heightened awareness of ritual. I believe that it is their attention to the ritual practices of the lay community at large that led them to recognize how Chinese people participated in ritual aspects of Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism. The alleged doctrinal contradictions found by missionaries between the theologies of these religions

[46] What is interesting about John Nevius account is his grouping of Chinese religion that is based on what he believes to be the preexisting classification adopted by the Chinese. He introduces the terms "*Ju-Kiau, Sih-Kiau,* and *Tau-Kiau"* [sic] as Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism respectably. Here *kiau* (*jiao* 教*)* "to teach" when used as a noun becomes a "system of teaching". Nevius is clear to state that these terms are by no means synonymous to "religion" in both meaning or use in English. Yet, for whatever reason he precedes to explore each in the ways they do and do not fit within a Protestant taxonomic system.

[47] Culbertson, 123.

and people's religious practices are perhaps indicative of a Protestant inclination to project institutional, doctrinal, and theological divides.

2.4.2 Zhejiang as the Religious Centre of China

These sources give the strong impression that Zhejiang was a centre of Chinese religion. To some extent it was. As the examples below show Hangzhou and Ningbo were both regional centres for pilgrimage. Hangzhou for its famous lake and monastic centres, Ningbo for its proximity to Tiantaishan 天台山—the alleged birthplace of Tiantai (Japanese: Tendai) Buddhism. John Nevius explicitly states that Hangzhou is one of China's greatest centres of Buddhism, partially due to the great temple festivals the city is known for. He describes one such festival:

> I had an opportunity to witness the crowds of pilgrims who come here to worship in the spring. The canals leading to the city were filled for miles in some directions with the boats of worshipers, many of whom had come long distances to pay their homage to these sacred shrines. The numerous paved roads or paths winding though the valleys in every direction were occupied by an almost continuous stream of visitors, the rich in sedans and the poor on foot…. Entering the temples, the sight was hardly less distressing. The people mad upon their idols; the priests rapidly gathering in their ill-gotten gains; old and young, with earnest and anxious countenances, pouring out the burdens of their hearts before idol gods, and bowing down and striking their foreheads on the paved floor…[48]

Culbertson, who on more than one occasion witnessed temple festivals and feasts in Ningbo tells a similar story. He describes constant frenzy both outside and within temple compounds. Here services and rituals are solicited and performed by monastics. Pilgrims,

[48] Nevius, John, 96-97.

men and women, rich and poor, patronize vendors selling cakes and meat, while old men gamble, and hawkers sell ritual goods—candles, incense and prayers.[49]

These scenes of diversity, commerce, and ritual parallel what one might experience in Hangzhou or Putuoshan today. Today, however, the frenzy of activity is no longer limited to auspicious days. Tourism drives patronage. As descriptions and explanations of Chinese religion found along the East coast of China, most notably Buddhism, spread throughout missionary writings, a model of Chinese religion was established. These descriptions fed into a collective Western-driven narrative of Chinese religion. The Buddhist temples, gods, and rituals found in Zhejiang came to represent Chinese Buddhism at large. As missionary expeditions gained momentum toward the end of the Nineteenth Century, missions expanded west, away from the coast, and away from what missionaries had previously come to know of Chinese "culture." What the next chapter will show is that missionaries were well aware of ethnic and practical differences within Buddhism. The Chinese identity that they had come to expect on China's coast was challenged by what they encountered elsewhere. When we look to missionary accounts of Wutaishan, for example, a surprisingly multi-cultural narrative is revealed.

[49] Culbertson, 108.

Chapter 3

Wutaishan 五臺山 and Buddhism in North China: Missionary Depictions of Religion on the Border

The previous chapter has demonstrated the use of missionary writing in uncovering and negotiating depictions of Buddhism on Putuoshan and Chinese religion in Zhejiang Province. This chapter sets out to demonstrate how, or if, similar sentiments are presented through missionary writings on another of China's sacred Buddhist mountains, Wutaishan. Below I highlight missionary narratives of Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist experiences at Wutaishan. The borderland location of Wutaishan, its imperial patronage and historical connections with Tibet, Mongolia, and even India, forge a landscape of multiple identities and changing narratives—the significance of which has only recently begun to be explored by scholars of Chinese religion. While similar themes are carried throughout the accounts in Chapter Two and Three, the accounts presented below introduce how missionaries perceived ethnic and ritual differentiations between Buddhist groups—something that is not present in accounts of Buddhism on Putuoshan. Missionaries' recognition of ritual differentiations can help scholars to construct a truer historical narrative of Wutaishan. These accounts, if given their due respect, reveal information about where different groups of Buddhists practiced on the mountain, which activities or rituals they performed and how they actually performed them.

3.1 Shanxi Province & Wutaishan

The Shanxi province, with its mountains, hills, and plateaus, is nuzzled in between the provinces of Hebei 河北省, Henan 河南省, Shaanxi 陕西省 and Inner Mongolia 内蒙古自治區. The borders of Shanxi have shifted throughout China's long history of civil wars, foreign occupations and dynastic changes. It was during the Qing dynasty 清朝 (1644-1912) that the borders of the province were extended north of the Great Wall and into Mongolian lands. The reshaping of Shanxi's borders, particularly during the Qing, played a role in influencing the ethnic diversity of those who lived and worshiped at Wutaishan. Late Nineteenth Century accounts of Wutaishan written by Protestant missionaries describe a multi-ethnic population. What these sources confirm is that the sacred mountain was far more important for Mongol pilgrims than it was for other groups at this time. The information written by these missionaries contributed to the collective perspective of Chinese Buddhism of the age. They witnessed and encountered ethnic diversity. Surprisingly, as a result, missionary depictions of Wutaishan are quite different than those of Putuoshan: this northern sacred mountain is approached with relative tolerance and understanding.

3.1.1 Wutaishan as a Centre of Buddhism

Wutaishan is the northern marchmount of Chinese Buddhism's four sacred mountains and is comprised of hundreds of temples and shrines scattered across a collection of five mountain peaks. It has a long history of pilgrimage and for centuries has been patronized as the mountain home of the Bodhisattva of wisdom, Mañjuśrī 文殊師利菩

薩.[1] Prior to the Seventh Century, the mountain was relatively well established as a Buddhist pilgrimage site, but as Susan Andrews' resent work shows, it was during the Seventh and Eighth centuries that preexisting Indian Buddhist narratives were interwoven alongside local tales which "extend[ed] the site's newfound importance as Mañjuśrī's dwelling place and a hub of the Buddhist world."[2]

Andrews' study of Tang dynasty 唐朝 (618-907) gazetteers, (like the *Ancient Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool* (*Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳) which contains founding legends of some of Wutaishan's temples), "illuminates the malleability of Mount Wutai's past" by demonstrating how patrons and practitioners creatively promoted and recast the mountain as a place of Buddhist practice.[3] Furthermore, her work contributes to an understanding of the interconnectivity and exchange of not only Buddhist narratives, but cultural and ethnic narratives as well. This chapter carries on in the same vein, albeit later in history. First-hand accounts like miracle tales and travelogues, written by pilgrims and patrons, narrate Wutaishan's history during the Tang dynasty. While similar accounts of Wutaishan do exists from the Qing, little information remains—or has survived—from the last few decades of the dynasty. Missionary writings, however, do. They offer first-hand accounts of the mountain's physical and religious landscape during the last thirty years of

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[1] Mañjuśrī, known in China as Wenshu 文殊, is well known as the Bodhisattva of wisdom. Wenshu emerges as an active deity on Wutaishan around the Seventh Century where accounts of miraculous appearances began to arise. The chapters on Where Bodhisattvas Dwell 菩薩住處品 in both the sixty- and eighty-roll Chinese translations of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* (*Huayan jing*, T. nos. 278-279) divulge that the Mahāyāna bodhisattva of wisdom, Mañjuśrī, resides on a mountain in the northeast called Mount Clear and Cool. Reading Wutaishan, located in central China, as Mount Clear and Cool seems, therefore, to be inextricably tied to this scripture.

[2] Susan Andrews, "The Temple of the Prince Who Torched His Body and the Making of Mount Wutai," in *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies,* 29, (2016): 122.

[3] Ibid., 93.

the Nineteenth Century—a period of Wutaishan's history that has been neglected by scholars.

3.1.2 Wutaishan Past and Present

Due to its engagement across a wide foreign audience, Wutaishan developed as a centre of both pilgrimage and Buddhism. Putuoshan, on the other hand, was frequented by foreigners more so because of its coastal location at the crossroads of numerous trade routes. During the mid to late Qing, trade routes through China's interior led to the relative prosperity of Shanxi. Yet travel between China's east coast to Shanxi province, even to this day, is difficult. Due to the mountainous landscape of the province, narrow roads and winding railways make travel slow and at times, dangerous. However, the arid landscape in northern Shanxi connects the province easily to its Mongolian neighbours. With the provinces' borders shifting during the Qing, trade ties were made with Mongolia and Russia. Chinese silk and tea moved north while livestock, wool, and leather moved south.[4] Along with the movement of goods came the movement of people, many of who traveled south from Mongolia on pilgrimage to Wutaishan.

Today, Wutaishan is quite far removed from large urban centres, this in comparison to the convenient coastal location of Putuoshan. The major cities within Shanxi are far less fashionable than those of Zhejiang. Datong 大同, over two hundred kilometers north of Wutaishan is a city built upon the mining industry and lacks the glamour and amenities to entertain mass tourism. Mining in Shanxi contributes to over fifty percent of the provinces'

[4] Andrew Kaiser, *The Rushing in of the Purpose of God: Christian Missions in Shanxi since 1876,* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016), Kindle Edition, location 210.

GDP, and while Zhejiang drew over ten million foreign tourists in 2015, Shanxi received only 594 thousand.[5]

At Wutaishan the small town of Taihuai 臺懷, located in the valley centre of Wutaishan's five peaks, caters to the needs of visitors. The narrow streets are lined with identical shops all selling the same thing—ritual paraphernalia: incense, beads, mantras and statues of the Buddha and numerous bodhisattvas. There is an obvious indication that this town, with its small family-run restaurants and locally owned hotels, caters to an audience of pilgrims. While Putuoshan also caters to the needs of Buddhist pilgrims, its sandy beaches and leisurely atmosphere are marketed towards China's massive middle class as a premium vacation spot. Wutaishan is quite the opposite. A relatively new visitor centre greets everyone upon entering the national park, and there is an obvious and continual improvement to infrastructure—roads and walkways. Yet, overall Wutaishan seems more disconnected from the modernity of coastal China.

Nonetheless, for centuries Wutaishan has been a renowned pilgrimage centre. There is a wealth of information, like the travel writings of foreign pilgrims or the gazetteers of imperial patrons, which informs our known history of the site. Gazetteers have long been the main source for studying the origins of sacred space in China. Only recently, however, have these sources been recast within a pan-Asian context. In her PhD dissertation *Representing Mount Wutai's* 五臺山 *Past: A Study of Chinese and Japanese Miracle Tales about the Five Terrace Mountain*, Andrews notes that while predominant scholarship about

[5] *Shanxi: Market Profile*, Hong Kong Trade Development Council, published online 21 Dec 2016, retrieved February 21, 2017 from http://china-trade-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/Fast-Facts/Shanxi-Market-Profile/ff/en/1/1X39VTST/1X06BVQP.htm

Wutaishan "has revealed much about Mount Wutai's history during and within the borders of the Tang and Song, it has had less to say about the mountain's later and larger East Asian significance."[6] Her dissertation successfully shows how, throughout its history, the ethnicity, denomination, and ritual practices of Wutaishan's patrons varied. This variance has directly reshaped the mountains' importance and significance throughout history.

3.1.3 Ethnic and Cultural Significance

To this point, Wutaishan can be seen as a site with a greater multi-cultural identity than that of Putuoshan. Chün-fang Yü's elaborate work *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara* reveals that Putuoshan, and its connection to female representations of Guanyin, was forged in China through strong connections to apocryphal Chinese narratives and miracle tales.[7] As a result, the image and perception of Guanyin as she is found today on Putuoshan is arguably very "Chinese"—strongly connected to apocryphal Chinese writings as well as to Avalokiteśvara's Indian origins. Representations of Mañjuśrī at Wutai have been forged and recast throughout the sites constant interaction with differing nationalities, ethnicities and Buddhist sects. As this chapter will show, by the late Qing, Wutaishan had been recast as Mongolian Buddhism's predominant pilgrimage site.

Well into the Eighth Century, as Chan Buddhism reached beyond China's formal borders, Wutaishan was already established as a "famous cultic center."[8] Wutaishan's

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[6] Susan Andrews, "Representing Mount Wutai's 五臺山 Past: A Study of Chinese and Japanese Miracle Tales about the Five Terrace Mountain," (PhD Diss., Columbia University, 2013) 12.
[7] Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).
[8] Bernard Faure, "Relics and Flesh Bodies," in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, eds. Susan Naquin and Chün-Fang Yü, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992),164.

international patronage from Japanese monks is perhaps the most well known. Accounts like *The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (*Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記) by the Japanese Monk Ennin 圓仁 (793-864) have been used to inform depictions of Chinese religion at Wutaishan during the Tang. The later biography of Chōnen 奝然 (938-1016) in *Biographies of Eminent Monks of the Eastern Country* (*Tōgoku kōsōden* 東國高僧傳, comp. 1688), has played a significant role in presenting how Wutaishan shaped Japanese Buddhist worldviews. The comparison of Japanese accounts of Wutaishan reveals how, early on, the mountain was cast as *the* international center of the Mañjuśrī cult. However, following the establishment of similar sacred spaces in Japan, later Japanese accounts construct the mountain as just one of many hubs of Mañjuśrī devotion.[9]

It may be safe to say that Wutaishan is important to China today because of the changing roles it has held for non-Chinese devotees. When the scope of Wutaishan's significance is confined to Chinese context alone, (as has been done frequently in past scholarship) the mountain is cast as the centre and *source* of Buddhist identity and teaching. Such an approach is misleading. Wutaishan has played a significant role for Buddhists across Asia, and as Andrews argues, the mountain is less a *source* of Buddhism and more so a *place* where Buddhism came to be recast to meet the needs of its changing audiences.

What we know of Wutaishan's past is sourced through travel accounts of those who visited. During the Qing, Wutaishan received notable Chinese imperial favour. This resulted in, not only a large amount of imperial sanctioned ritual, but also the production of

[9] Andrews, *Representing Mount Wutai's 五臺山 Past,* 168-206. Andrews specifically explores the relationship of Wutaishan to sacred landscapes in Japan through the biography of Chōnen in the 5th chapter of her dissertation.

numerous imperial accounts and gazetteers about the mountain. Recent scholarship argues that this material was produced first as means to oversee control of Mongols and Tibetans, and second to emphasize the importance of Tibetan Buddhists who were ethnically Chinese.[10] The fear in relying upon Chinese sources to study Wutaishan, or to study Buddhism at large, is that these sources have been scrutinized and edited, potentially numerous times, for political purposes. Non-Chinese sources thus reveal pertinent and differing accounts of Wutaishan's religious and social significance. Yet very few scholars consider missionary accounts of the late Qing—a period where little written history, imperial histories, or foreign accounts exist—in exploring Wutaishan's history. Here is where the travel writings of Christian missionaries can fill in narrative gaps and illuminate further the uses, perspectives, and roles of Wutaishan in the religious landscape of China and beyond. The disconnection of missionary accounts from a history of Chinese imperial influence and editorial restriction is an extraordinary benefit. Missionaries reveal telling depictions of Wutaishan's ethnic diversity.

3.2. Northern Struggles and Mission Differences

The following examination of late Nineteenth Century missionary writings differs from the previous chapter for a number of reasons. Missions and foreign Christian communities were deeply established in Zhejiang by the end of the Qing. As a result, the missionaries I have discussed above all lived and worked within the Chinese religious landscape they describe. These missionaries possessed the luxuries of living in large urban

[10] See Gary Tuttle, "Tibetan Buddhism at Wutai Shan in the Qing: The Chinese-language Register," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6 (2011): 163-214.

centres and had the means to travel relatively easily to surrounding temples and sacred sites. By contrast Wutaishan was, and is, far removed from larger urban centers and missionary communities—the largest missionary community of the Nineteenth Century was in Taiyuan 太原 located over two hundred kilometers to the south. Additionally the poverty, disparity, and famine that occurred in the Shanxi province at this time hindered missionizing efforts. Though a small number of Catholics had been missionizing in the province prior to the late Qing, its wasn't until the latter half of the century that Protestants from both the Baptist Missionary Society and the China Inland Mission were able to stably situate themselves in the province—largely due to the outcome the newly minted Treaty of Tianjin in 1858 that granted the British freedom to travel anywhere inside China.[11]

Missionary accounts of Wutaishan differ from those of Putuoshan firstly because missionaries did not spend extensive time vacationing there. Some of the accounts about Wutaishan I reference below are from missionaries who did not work or live in Shanxi, but rather visited the mountain as they travelled through northern China. Of the missionaries that did live and work in Shanxi, their mission work was derived largely from the call for humanitarian aid elsewhere in the province. Rural and inland missions of the later Nineteenth Century had to negotiate the role of their missionizing in the context of opium addiction and famine.[12] The Protestant missions spearheaded by the Baptist Missionary Society and the China Inland Mission did not reach the cities of Shanxi until late in the century, for example in the city of Datong in 1886, and Taiyuan only a decade earlier.

[11] Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China,* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1990), 180.
[12] Kaiser, location 119.

3.3 Meet More Missionaries

The same criterion I applied in selecting missionary sources in the previous chapter has also been applied here. English language missionary sources about Shanxi province and depictions of Wutaishan are limited. One popular account I have not included is Scottish missionary Alexander Williamson's *Journeys in North China, Manchuria and Eastern Mongolia*, a detailed account of northern China that includes two chapters regarding Shanxi province. His exploration has little to say about religion, and rather describes at length the landscape, weather, and geographical significance of the province. I am also aware of numerous, non-English, accounts that do include information about Wutaishan.[15] Language barriers prevent me from using these sources and I have been unable to find secondary English resources pertaining to these individuals aside from a book review of Pokotiloff's *U-tai, Ego Proschloe I Nastoyachee* by D Pozdneyeff. This review notes that Pokotiloff's book references prior European visitors to the mountain, two of whom I introduce below, Rev. Dr. Joseph Edkins and James Gilmour.[16]

Joseph Edkins' (1823-1904) journey to Wutaishan in October of 1872 is one of the most detailed missionary accounts accessible in English. His name should be relatively familiar first because he has been mentioned in the previous chapter and second for his connection to the field of Sinology. Edkins was born in Gloucestershire, England and at a

[15] See D. Pokotiloff, *U-tai, Ego Proschloe I Nastoyachee,*(St. Petersburg, 1893); Ferdinand von Richthofen, *Tegebücher aus China* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1907); I am also aware of a Russian account by G. Potanin from 1983, but an unable to translate/Romanize the title and publication information.

[16] D. Pozdneyeff, "Notices of Books: U-tai, Ego Proschloe I Nastoyachee (Wu-T'ai, Its former and Present State). By D. Pokotiloff. 8vo. pp.152. St. Petersburg, 1893," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Britain and Ireland*, 26 (1894): 181-182.

young age began his education at the private Congregationalist school run by his minister father.[17] After graduating from the University of London he joined the London Missionary Society and travelled to China in 1848. Of his 57 years in China, 30 were spent in Beijing where he would eventually leave the London Missionary Society due to methodological differences to pursue the study of Chinese life, culture, politics and religion.[18] Once divorced from missionary society, Edkins founded the *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1857, where he contributed and published some of his work.[19] He held a great passion for Chinese language and literature. His studies of Chinese religion and textual translations are notably influential among missionaries, sinologists, and linguists. He established himself as an authority on Chinese Buddhism through two well-known books on the subject: *Religion in China: A Brief Account of the Three Religions of the Chinese*, which offers historical, ideological and practical introductions to Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, and *Chinese Buddhism: A Volume of Sketches, Historical, Descriptive, and Critical*, an in-depth look at the origin, history, migration and developments of the different schools of Buddhism found in China. The first book, *Religion in China,* provides us with a very detailed account of Edkins' travels through Shanxi, where he spent a number of days at Wutaishan, participating in festivals and visiting with the lamas.

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[17] S.W. Bushell, "Rev. Joseph Edkins, D.D.," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland,* January (1906): 269.
[18] Ibid., 270.
[19] Ibid.. The journal ran for almost a century from 1858-1948 and produced 109 numbers in 75 volumes. The content focused largely on varying elements of "China studies" and to some extent East Asia. Edkins contributed works on Chinese texts, language and religious mythology, as well has translations. He obituary credits him to being one of the most well read in Chinese literature at the time, noting his work on language and Chinese grammar to be Edkins' greatest work.

Another British missionary, Timothy Richard (1845-1919), details the religious environment of Wutaishan in the 1880s. Richard, born in Wales, served as one of the few members of the English Baptist Missionary Society during his first years in China. His missionary style and focus on relief work caught the interest of the London Missionary Society who invited him to Shanxi where a devastating famine and drought was taking place. As Andrew Kaiser explains, "[t]his disaster provided the initial opening for Protestant mission work in Shanxi—a work in which Timothy Richard's role would prove vital…According to available records, not one Protestant believer or missionary was to be found in Taiyuan or anywhere else in the province of Shanxi prior to [Richard's arrival in] 1877."[20] Shortly after his arrival, Richard helped to establish the first Protestant Church in Taiyuan. Later, as a means to learn about Buddhism, he spent a significant amount of time visiting with lamas and participating in ritual celebrations at Wutaishan.

James Gilmour (1843-1891) was born in Cathkin, Scotland and joined the London Missionary Society while studying abroad in London, where, soon after he was appointed to reopen the Mongolian Mission.[21] Gilmour's *Among the Mongols* offers a perspective on Wutaishan and Buddhism situated from outside "China" proper. His writing on Mongolian life, society, and religion come from his encounters with scattered communities from across Mongolia. Gilmour's laborious study of Mongolian language and society made him an expert. The physical isolation of working in Mongolia led him to advocate for the needed support of the Mongolian mission. Gilmour's trials and tribulations abroad, however, did not produce a single Christian convert, a point that many used to argue against the

[20] Kaiser, location 318.
[21] Kathleen Lodwick, "The Legacy of James Gilmour," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 27, No. 1 (2003): 34.

continuation of missionaries in the region.[22] Nonetheless, reception of his writing on Mongolia has accredited Gilmour as a pioneer in the field of cultural anthropology.[23]

Finally, I introduce Rev. T M Morris (birth and death unknown). Although I have found little information about Morris, I have chosen to include his account because it is a detailed travel journal of northern China. Morris and his travel companion Richard Glover (birth and death unknown) were both English ministers sent by the Baptist Mission Society to report on the work of affiliated missions in inland China, including stations in Shanxi. Morris' travel account *Winter in North China* was originally a series of letters sent from China and published in the *East Anglican Daily Times* and the *Freeman*.[24] Morris' account is valuable to this study for a number of reasons. Most notable is the fact that he is not a missionary. His travel in China was not motivated by the call to missionize; rather he was hired to report on the work and success of the missions themselves. What his writing reveals is an intimate knowledge of China, its people, and its religions, which Morris gained from his engagement with prior missionary publications. In fact, he frequently references the likes of Edkins, James Legge, William Martin, and Scottish missionary Carstairs Douglas (1830-1877). What his account shows is that missionary writings were indeed being received and read by those outside the mission field. Moreover, the earlier publications and sinological works of English and Scottish missionaries had, by this time, become foundational in theological and missionary training.

[22] Ibid., 36.
[23] Ibid.
[24] T M Morris, *Winter in North China,* (New York & Chicago: Fleming H Revell Company, 1892), 12.

3.4 Missionary Sketches of Wutaishan and Religion in North China

The themes of contempt and criticism found in the Protestant writings explored in the previous chapter also carry through to the writing of missionaries in inland China. However, subtle differences do arise. As I have briefly touched on above, while mountain and valley roads made travel to and from Beijing slow and treacherous, the physical location of Shanxi opened it up to northern trade routes with Mongolia and Russia. The authors I have introduced here each demonstrate an awareness of the cultural and ethnic exchanges taking place in Shanxi. The missionary examples provided below also demonstrate an awareness of Wutaishan as a centre of Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism. In the accounts of Putuoshan discussed in the previous chapter, no blatant distinction is made about the race or ethnic background of the people living on or making pilgrimage to sacred sites in Zhejiang. It is assumed that these people are all Chinese—as is the Buddhism they practice. Accounts of Wutaishan, however, make clear ritual distinctions between what can be considered Chinese, Mongolian, or Tibetan Buddhism.

3.4.1 Mongolian and Tibetan Pilgrimage

By far the most detailed and well know account of Wutaishan is that of Joseph Edkins. Edkins became familiar with the Lama Buddhism found in the northern capital during his many years working in Beijing. His familiarity with the religion and politics of large urban centres was challenged when he traveled west from Beijing to Wutaishan. Here information, literature and poetry circulate slowly. The illiteracy of the rural class, he believed, was one reason for the unsuccessful spreading of Christianity in this area.[25] Though Christianity did not move rapidly throughout rural north China, Edkins' account

[25] Joseph Edkins, *Religion in China*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & CO, 1877), 209-210.

reveals that Buddhism did. Buddhist pilgrims were frequently seen prostrating along the roadways. Edkins describes the following scene:

> We stopped for the night at Pei-poo [sic], and here we were said to be 500 *le* [*li* (160 miles)] from Woo-tai [sic]. This is the ordinary route of Lamas from Peking [Beijing], and along the road may occasionally be seen more than usually devout pilgrims prostrating themselves on the ground all the way to the sacred mountain…It is only the Mongols that do this. We do not hear of the Chinese making this sort of painful pilgrimage. The Mongols are willing on account of their reverence for Woo-tai-shan and a wish to conform to a fashion that has grown up among them.[26]

Another account by Scottish missionary Alexander Williamson notes that "not unfrequently[sic] men, and sometimes women, may be seen travelling from inland districts [of Mongolia] to Woo-t'ai-shan, the sacred hill in Shan-si[sic], measuring the way by prostrations..."[27] Here we learn that not only are Buddhists traveling to and from Wutaishan frequently, but *how* these pilgrims travel is marked by their differing ethnic identities.

3.4.2 Ethnic and Ritual Diversity

Timothy Richard, in an attempt to learn more about Buddhism, lived for a month with an abbot of one of Shanxi's chief temples.[28] He was able to establish rapport with this abbot and exchanged knowledge about both their respective religions. The insight Richard gained form this experience likely effected his description of the demographics and ritual environment of Wutaishan in 1880. He explains that there were over a thousand resident monks on the mountain belonging to two sects, "the ordinary blue-robed Buddhists of

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[26] Ibid., 211.
[27] Alexander Williamson, *Journeys in north China, Manchuria, and eastern Mongolia*, (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870), 18.
[28] Richard does not provide the name of the temple nor does he give any indication of where it is located. I am unsure if this temple was at Wutaishan. Though he does describe meeting with one of Wutaishan's abbot's later in this writing it would be speculation to assume this was the abbot who he lives with.

China…[and] the yellow and red robed Buddhists of Tibet and Mongolia, called Lamas."[29] The contrast Richard makes between these sects does not end with their dress, but extends into his telling of their ritual celebrations as well.

For Richard, the distinction between Mongolian and Chinese ritual is remarkably clear. The majority of his account of Wutaishan consists of a narration of the ritual events of two neighbouring temples, one Mongolian the other Chinese. The first event he describes is orchestrated by "the Abbot of the Central Lama monastery" and takes places within a crowded temple complex.[30] After being seated on a platform next to Chinese and Mongol officials, Richard describes the following:

> The worship began by beating of a great drum to the accompaniment of some music. Then prayers were recited in a very deep bass voice…Next followed a most unexpected and surprising dance. A number of men appeared wearing extraordinary masks on their heads, some like tigers, others like birds of prey… After watching this religious dance I visited the chief temple of the Chinese Buddhists, where I witnessed a great contrast in their worship. Everything was most reverential and impressive…The priests were divided into two bands, one on the right of the aisle, the other on the left. One band stood with the palms of the hands pressed together in front of their faces, and sang in unison a verse of four lines, whilst the other band prostrated themselves in silence.[31]

Richard's description reveals a mutual sharing of the religious landscape at Wutaishan. What is intriguing about his description of the first ceremony is the "unexpected and surprising dance." His specific reference to masks and dancing leads me to believe this ceremony may have been a *cham* dance, what Wen-Shing Chou notes was a bi-annual occurrence during the Qing, consisting of a procession of "musicians and dancers dressed

[29] Timothy Richard, *Forty Five Years in* China, (London: T. Fisher Unwin LTD., 1916), 170.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., 170-171.

and masked as various deities and protectors."[32] The performance of this dance, Chou argues, is "an embodiment of the process of negotiating between cultural and religious traditions, past and present... [and] has come to define and continuously reiterate Wutaishan's conversion to Tibetan Buddhism."[33]

These missionary authors were well aware of the ethnic and religious distinction between Chinese, Mongolian, and Tibetan. In his demographic record of Wutaishan Edkins explains that the number of Mongolian lamas measured in the thousands—though this number fluctuates constantly due to pilgrimage—and the Buddhist priests (who he defines as Chinese by birth) numbered in the hundreds. There is another group, the Chinese Lamas who, according to Edkins, practice Tibetan Buddhism. He suggests that the Tibetan Buddhists at Wutaishan are ethnically Chinese, and after their ordination adopted the customs, prayers, dress and deportment of Tibetan Buddhism.[34]

Edkins account notes the differences in the temples at Wutaishan both organizationally with the placement of idols and the incorporation of differing deities, as well as functionally in the rituals and practices performed. Edkins also offers us a description of the *cham* dance, writing:

> The observance of the sacred dance, "Cham harail," at Woo-tai, a masquerade of Hindoo[sic] gods going in procession, is after the model employed at Yung-ho-kung [Yonghegong 雍和宫] in Peking. At Poo-sa-ting [Pusading 普薩頂] these are first ten days of chanting, from the 6th to the 15th. The dance and masquerade are on the last two days. The books used are the Kongso. The performers are about sixty in number, and they practice their parts for two month beforehand.[35]

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[32] Wen-Shing Chou, "Ineffable Paths: Mapping Wutaishan in Qing Dynasty China," *The Art Bulletin*, 89, No. 1 (2007): 119-120.
[33] Ibid., 120.
[34] Edkins, 236.
[35] Ibid.

Edkins' describes this large-scale ritual as Tibetan and Indian in origin. His overall impression of Wutaishan is prefaced with the statement, "We were now in Lama-land, and must expect to see arrangements peculiar to Lama Buddhism."[36] But even the lamas he encountered differ from those in Beijing he had previously become accustom to. At Wutaishan he discovers a large number of lamas who read both Pali and Mongol writing, as opposed to the lamas in Beijing that read Tibetan. Mongolian and Tibetan motifs are found to intermingle within Wutaishan's temples. Edkins describes Tibetan mythological scenes on the walls of temples patronized and restored by Mongol princes.[37]

The diversity of cultures and Buddhist groups is also found within descriptions of the monastic communities. Morris, referencing Edkins, notes that Wutaishan is well known as "a great centre of Lamaism, to which large numbers of pilgrims flock" and estimates 1000 Mongol and 2000 Chinese lamas reside there.[38] In the chapter "The Religions of China," Morris gives a short and general introduction into the religious and superstitious practices of the Chinese. He presents images similar to the accounts of Chinese religion we explored in the previous chapter. To Morris' credit however, he does make a regional distinction between forms of Buddhism. Unlike his east coast contemporaries he notes the prevalence of "Lamaism" in parts of north China, Tibet, Mongolia and Manchuria.[39] Morris' awareness of the regional diversities of Buddhism is a strong indication of his intimate knowledge and engagement with missionary writings on Chinese religion and culture. Morris' chapter on Chinese religion is made up almost entirely from quotations and references to the work of

[36] Ibid., 226.
[37] Ibid., 228.
[38] Morris, 227.
[39] Ibid., 226.

missionaries. The significance of his references to fellow missionaries will be explored further in the following chapter. My inclusion of Morris here has been to show that Western accounts of Wutaishan at this time contribute to a narrative history of the mountain where Mongolian Buddhism plays a significant role. These accounts give more precedence to Mongolian patronage at Wutaishan, which contradicts views of the historical predominance of Wutaishan as a center for Tibetan Buddhists.

3.4.3 Wutaishan as a Mongolian Haven

Though there is a strong presence of Tibetan influences, iconography and ritual at Wutaishan during this time, each of the authors presented here understand Wutaishan to be one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Mongolian Buddhists. In fact, they give off the impression that the current financial and popular success of the mountain is due to the patronage of Mongolian Buddhists. Each account highlights the dominance of the traveling lay Mongol community. Gilmour, having a strong grasp of Mongolian Buddhism, explains that Wutaishan is the most important place for Buddhist Mongol pilgrims:

> As Jerusalem to the Jews, as Mecca to the Mahometans[sic], so is Wu T'ai Shan to the Mongols… It is true that the mania which possesses the Mongols for making pilgrimages carries them to many other shrines, some of which are both celebrated and much frequented, but none of them can be compared to Wu T'ai. At all seasons of the year, in the dead of winter, in the heat of summer, pilgrims, priests, and laymen, male and female, old and young, rich and poor, solitary and in bands, on foot and mounted, from places far and near, may be seen going to and returning from this, the most sacred spot on earth to the Mongol Buddhist…[40]

[40] James Gilmour, *Among the Mongols*, (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1888), 160.

The benefits of visiting Wutaishan are said to be healing and offer happiness after death. Gilmour believed that these claims convinced devout Mongolians to attempt to make pilgrimage to Wutaishan at least once in their lifetime.[41]

While the efficacious appeal of Wutaishan is an obvious reason for its popularity among Mongols, these missionaries also show how the mountain valley served as a centre of commerce and trade. Richard writes, "Once a year in midsummer there was held a great religious gathering at this mountain, similar in importance to the Day of Atonement among the Jews. It was also an opportunity for a great fair to which Mongols brought ponies and mules for sale."[42] Just as the temple fairs in Hangzhou and Ningbo drew large crowds of men and women, Mongol men and women were found in the temples and markets in Wutaishan on auspicious days. Edkins describes a bazaar near the central temple, Pusading, as "full of life, Mongols are constantly here buying from the Chinese shopkeepers."[43] Reflecting on his time in Wutaishan, Edkins concludes:

> …it is one of the three most noteworthy Buddhist mountains. But neither Ngo-mei [Emeishan] in Sze-chwen [Sichuan], nor Poo-to [Putuoshan] in the Eastern Ocean, can compare with it in the number of its monasteries, monks, and pilgrims. Here emperors order prayers to be made for their mothers and for their people. Kanghe [Kangxi] himself was a frequent pilgrim at these shrines, commemorating his visits by monumental inscriptions at the chief temples.[44]

Though similar imperial patronage by past emperors was evidently lacking at Putuoshan at this time, Wutaishan was, by comparison, remarkably successful.

After surveying these missionary accounts, it is safe to say that Wutaishan prospered in the late Qing, most evidently, due to the large volume of Mongolian pilgrims. The

[41] Ibid., 161.
[42] Richard, 170.
[43] Edkins, 228.
[44] Ibid., 244.

patronage of Mongol pilgrims was so important to Wutaishan's temples that large expeditions were sent out to eastern Mongolia to collect money, livestock, and other donated goods. Gilmour explains that these:

> annual collecting expeditions, which, consisting of several lamas, start in spring, travel about with carts and tents in summer, and return before winter…These expeditions are numerous and indefatigable, and perhaps there is no tent, rich or poor, throughout the whole length and breadth of the eastern half of Mongolia, which is not visited by such deputations every year. These collectors penetrate even beyond the bounds of the Chinese empire…Food, tea, skins, cattle, money, all are eagerly received…[45]

Edkins tell us that Pusading was one of the richest temples at this time, owning land and estates that allegedly brought in "tens of thousands of taels annually."[46] Gilmour, while visiting Pusading, was invited into the "room of the attendant of the great lama," and he depicts the space as "snug… clean, comfortable, and kept warm by a charcoal fire in a well-polished brass brasier."[47] These missionaries give the impression that the monasteries at Wutaishan were financially stable in the latter decades of the Qing, a surprising fact given that severe drought and poverty was reported across Shanxi at this time. Between 1875 and 1876 the province received little to no rain.[48] And yet Wutaishan prospered.

3.4.4 Women

Edkins, like Gilmour, also realized the importance of Wutaishan to the Mongolian laity, especially women. Describing the pagoda at Pusading, Edkins writes: "More than three hundred praying wheels are attached to this Dagoba [pagoda]. The devotee mounts a few stone steps and walks round the monument, touching the bells. We noticed Mongol women

[45] Gilmour, 168-169.
[46] Edkins, 239.
[47] Gilmour, 164-165.
[48] Kaiser, Location 295.

pushing each wheel as they walked round in token of respect to Buddha."[49] Edkins also describes the books, bells, prayers, beads and pictures sold at the neighbouring bazaar. But not all the goods for sale were of ritual significance. He explains that women were often seen in the bazaar buying pearls, coral and silver, which they used to adorn their head-dresses.[50] What's more, Edkins presents the Mongol women as "animated partly by natural kindness of disposition, partly by religious motives. Being very fervent Buddhists, they believe that good actions are meritorious, and will be the means of bringing upon them and on their families great happiness."[51] Edkins' account is unique in that it is the only one I have encountered so far that specifically speaks about the presence of women at Wutaishan. It is intriguing in that a similar sentiment towards women is echoed throughout the accounts in Chapter Two.

3.5 Negotiating Identity through Ritual

3.5.1 Wutaishan's Imperial Manchurian Connection

It is well documented that imperial patronage at Wutaishan earlier in the Qing attributed to the building and rebuilding of numerous temples.[52] Gary Tuttle, in his book *Tibetan Buddhism and the Making of Modern China* explains that the Mongolian successors of Genghis (Chinggis) Khan (1162?-1227) became strong patrons of Tibetan Buddhism. The relationship between Genghis' successors and "the institution that grew out of it created a

[49] Ibid., 237.
[50] Ibid., 238.
[51] Ibid., 239.
[52] Manchu emperor's patronage at Wutaishan, particularly Kangxi is known to have contributed greatly to the mountain during his reign. This is evident in the imperial records and gazetteers produced at this time, as well as through the numerous commemorative steles erected by Kangxi at the time.

close bond between China and Tibet, and between the religious and political functions of Tibetan lamas in service to the state."[53] Tuttle goes on to explain that from the Seventeen to Twentieth Century, the head lamas of Wutaishan played a significant role in representing Tibet (and Tibetan Buddhism) within the Chinese political scene.[54]

Missionary accounts show us that in the late Qing, Mongol influence and support at Wutaishan had grown. By this time there was a well-established connection between Tibetan Buddhism and imperial China, and while many Tibetan Buddhists are known to have lived in and around Beijing, Tuttle notes that many of them were not ethnic Tibetans. He believes that Pusading at Wutaishan and Yonghegong in Beijing were the only imperial sites at the time that housed ethnically Tibetan Lamas.[55] This point is congruent with Edkins' opinion that, for the most part, the Tibetan lamas at Wutaishan were ethically Chinese.

There is a historically marked influence of imperial Qing patronage on Wutaishan. The work of Wen-Shing Chou on Qing maps of Wutaishan has contributed greatly to an understanding of the mountain as a sacred place that fosters multiple narratives. In her article *Ineffable Paths: Mapping Wutaishan in Qing Dynasty China,* she explains that the "Qing court's enthusiastic patronage of Tibetan Buddhism at Wutaishan, which was in part spurred by the emperors' identification with the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, is best witnessed by the outpouring of imperially sponsored literature on Wutaishan…"[56] Her article goes on to show, however, that imperial literature produced narratives of Wutaishan's efficacy and

[53] Gary Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhism and the Making of Modern China*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 17.
[54] Ibid., 20.
[55] Ibid., 21.
[56] Chou, 120.

temple history that differed from the mountain's representation in Mongolian sources produced at this time. Her work, alongside this information retrieved from late Qing missionary accounts, indicate a strong differentiation between how Imperial China ethnically classified and depicted Wutaishan and the actual practices and ethnicity of the Buddhist community on the mountain.

3.5.2 Missionary Taxonomies

It is worth noting further the significance of missionaries' taxonomic prowess. They forged a means to classify the differing groups of Wutaishan's patrons based on ethnicity and religious practice, both of which were clearly differentiated through a number of physical markers like language and dress. Protestants forged and adapted the categories of Tibetan *zang* 藏, Mongolian *meng* 蒙 and Chinese *han* 漢 Buddhism. Taxonomies of Buddhist groups applied by missionaries are seemingly concise and, arguably, defined ethnically and practically more so than textually, allowing missionaries to distinguish Chinese patrons from Tibetans, despite both practicing Tibetan Buddhism. I want to stress the significance of how missionaries demarcated Buddhist groups at Wutaishan at this time. While certain missionaries like Edkins were predisposed to reading, translating, and classifying Buddhist texts, he explicitly notes how most of the lamas at Wutaishan engaged with texts of varying languages, both Mongolian and Tibetan. (This in contrast to the lamas of Beijing who only read Tibetan.) Early missionaries did not define or classify sects of Buddhism based on the texts Buddhists engaged with. The classification of these groups came from pre-existing practical divisions.

Differentiating between groups of Buddhist through ritual means may prove more fruitful than through textual or ethnic boundaries alone. Simply because in the area of Chinese literature and scholarship ethnic classifications were and remain far more contested. For the Chinese, ethnic classifications have to negotiate acceptance and usages within an additional imperial realm. The ethnic ascription of terms like of *zang* and *meng* did not come about until after the fall of the Qing, when China "declared the Republic of Five Nationalities in 1912 (representing the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Muslim and Tibetan nationalities)."[57] Indeed the Nineteenth Century encounters that missionaries had with the ethnic groups on Wutaishan were devoid of an intimate political awareness. The Chinese government's adaptation of classificatory nationalities that came about during the early Republican period, "drew more from Chinese traditions which defined political inclusion in terms of shared civilizational values rather than race or nationality."[58] The continued controversy in China surrounding ethnicity and nationality lies in whose "civilizational values" are to be accepted and shared.

The goal of this chapter has been twofold. First, I have shown the value of missionary accounts through their attention to ritual. The seemingly unintentional focus paid to the practical side of religious life, rather than a textual focus, allows these sources to define religious adherence based on action. This fosters a perspective that includes a wider realm of religious participants, not just those that read or engaged with authoritative canonical texts. Second, I wanted to apply a missionary analysis similar to that in Chapter Two to another sacred mountain. Despite the lack of female missionary authorship on Wutaishan,

[57] Prasenjit Duara, "The Multi-Nation State in Modern World History: The Chinese Experiment," *Frontier of History in China* Vol. 6 No. 2 (2011), 287.
[58] Duara, 289.

missionary accounts remain useful in the narratives of non-elite history they possess. They present information on the roles and activities of both male and female pilgrims. However, marked differences between the two Buddhist mountains are apparent. Wutaishan is obviously a place of diverse ethnic identities and Buddhist practices while Putuoshan appears to have a singular Buddhist, and Chinese, identity.

Chapter 4

Whose Presuppositions Are They?: Tracing the Gendered Development of Early Missionary Scholarship

In the previous chapters I introduced a number of Protestant missionaries whose publications contributed to early Western depictions of Chinese religion in both South and North China. In this chapter I shift my gaze away from the stories these missionaries tell to examine their methodological approaches as well as the material similarities the texts themselves possess—to study them as a scholar of Chinese Buddhism might study written manuscripts. I reveal how early Protestant theological presuppositions about ritual shaped missionary perspectives of Chinese religion. I explore how these presuppositions positioned empirical textual analysis over experience as the voice of religious authority. This Protestant theology, I argue, has also had a lasting impact on the place of ritual in the academic study of Chinese religion. By incorporating missionary writings into our repertoire of historical source material, the socio-historical role of missionaries within China's religious history is uncovered. Through an improved contextualization of these sources, we can better understand the social and cultural significance of ritual actives within premodern China.

4.1 Contemporary Sketches of Missionary Women

4.1.1 Women's Social and Literary Agency

The recent collection of essays, *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960*, examines the interchange of culture and ideology between American women and their mission work abroad. In the introduction,

editors Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar and Connie A. Shemo, illustrate the agency Protestant women held within the global context of the Nineteenth Century. They reveal the often unrecognized agency that missionary women possessed. "Excluded from the work of preaching, which was with rare exceptions a male preserve, women missionaries engaged in the kinds of work most subject to accusations of cultural imperialism. Education, moral reform, social work, and medical work aimed to transform the cultures of host countries…"[1] As a result, the work, lives and writings of missionary women express an informal social engagement with the communities they were a part of, arguably more so than the work of their male counterparts.

The development and repercussions of women's place within foreign missions and the effects of their involvement both home and abroad has been thoroughly studied by American scholars.[2] The goal in doing so has been to inform the history of American women and their essential contributions to society. These works illustrate how humble attempts by women to fund mission organizations eventually fostered widespread change and contributed to women's suffrage and liberation movements. They also show how women came to lead the construction and development of mission institutions, schools, and hospitals.

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[1] Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar and Connie A Shemo, "Introduction," in *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960,* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010) 4.

[2] Alongside *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960*, also see: Rhonda Anne Semple, *Missionary Women: Gender, Professionalism and the Victorian Idea of Christian Missions*, (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2003); R Pierce Beaver, *American Protestant Women in World Mission: A History of the First Feminist Movement in North America,* (Michigan: William B Publishing Co., 1968).

Reeves-Ellington et al. attribute the empowerment of Protestant women in America to the very ideologies of the Protestant Reformation and the Second Great Awakening (1798-1857). These ideologies "stressed the good news that individuals could achieve their own salvation—could personally control and improve their life circumstances…Envisioning themselves as the agents of this good news, some laypeople, women as well as men, carried it abroad…"[3] Rhonda Anne Semple explains that the "rhetoric of women's work for women" that came from growing female participation in missions, "opened opportunities for Western females and highlighted the necessity for women's professional development. Advocates for women's increased role in missions argued that it was only distinctly feminine characteristics that could 'save the heathen', not only spiritually (evangelism) but also physically (social welfare)."[4]

Most recently the social and cultural implications of missionary writing and publication have been thoroughly studied within an American-Asian context. The collection of essays, *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, edited by Suzanne Barnett and John Fairbank, sets out to explore the dual role of Nineteenth Century missionaries. Fairbank highlighted the necessity of studying Protestant missionaries in China within his introductory chapter, writing:

> [T]he studies in this volume make plain how profoundly the missionary writers were influenced by their growing appreciation of the Chinese cultural traditions. Trying to fit into it in the role of scholar, the better to have influence in changing it, they found themselves working on a two-way street. They transmitted images of China to the West while also shaping Chinese views of the outside world. Their personal aim was to influence the Chinese religiosity,

[3] Reeves-Ellington et al., 3.
[4] Rhonda Anne Semple, *Missionary Women: Gender, Professionalism and the Victorian Idea of Christian Missions*, (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2003), 6.

> but their historic function, as it turned out, was to transmit ideas and images in both directions.[5]

Overall, this collection of essays reiterates how central the publication of scripture, morality writings, or Christian tracts were to Chinese missionary efforts. This collection of essays illustrates that the translation of Chinese religious texts was not only used for scholarly gain, Chinese religious terms—or the foreign understandings of them—were fed back into the Chinese realm of religious knowledge and housed within Chinese Christianity. This work allows us to trace how and where Protestant constructs of religion were forged, adapted, and disseminated within China.

4.1.2 Empowerment ≠ Authority

Despite the admirable results of this recent scholarship on missionary women and missionary writing, what remains undervalued are the personal accounts, journals and diaries they produced. If, as the scholarship introduced above suggests, missionary women benefited directly from evangelical Protestantism's "empowerment of the laity" to the extent that they held influence and agency within missionary institutions both home and abroad, why do their written accounts and personal histories not find the same notability as their male counterparts? As I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, missionary women in China, women like Helen Nevius, wrote and published their own accounts of Chinese religion and culture. The type of social welfare work available to them, gave them access into areas of Chinese social life that foreign men were not privy to. Yet, the accounts

[5] John K. Fairbank, "Introduction: The Place of Protestant Writings in China's Cultural History," in Susanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank eds., *Christianity in China*: *Early Protestant Missionary Writings,* (Cambridge and London: The Committee in American-East Asian Relations of the Department of History, 1985), 4.

of Chinese society that came into popular readership at this time were those penned by high-achieving missionary men.

Mary Kupiec Cayton suggests that this may be due in part to how women's writings were perceived by both mission boards and publishing agencies. She explains that the news of traveling missionaries was communicated back home through monthly magazines:

> Letters written by males were attributed to the author by name, those by females simply to 'the wife of one of the missionaries.' American Board publications positioned male missionary correspondence within a public realm, presenting it as official reportage from commissioned agents to the organization. Women's correspondence, in contrast, took the form of letters to family and friends, their transformation into print making the reader party to an intimate exchange. While the men reported on the logistics of the mission and the formal progress of the party, the women focused mainly on feelings about departure for a strange land and longings for home and family.[6]

Though I specifically searched for female voices in my own study of missionary writings, the selective criteria I used limited my options. The difficulty in sourcing female missionaries who present clear interest in, or accounts of, Chinese religion is likely due to the publication bias Kupiec Cayton has illustrated above. Needless to say, the historical accounts of Chinese culture and religion evident in the writings of Protestant women were, (and remain), largely absent in the development of the study of Chinese religion.

4.2 The Literary Limits of Female Experience

I believe that the devaluation of women's voices in the study of Chinese religion, as well as the limit of women as valuable sources of religious information, is intimately connected to overly doctrinal definitions of religion that continue to pervade both

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[6] Mary Kupiec Cayton, "Canonizing Harriet Newell," in , Barbara Reeves-Ellington, Kathryn Kish Sklar and Connie A Shemo eds., *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 80-81.

scholarship and popular culture. There are a number of women whose travel writing describes sacred space and ritual practice in other areas of China. It is worth discussing a few more women whose travels in and writings about China reflect insights into religious practice much like those of Helen Nevius. Though, as I reveal below, Nevius follows suit with her male counterparts in ascribing textual authority to definitions of Chinese religion, she additionally engages with women on a personal level. Gender, while limiting foreign women from certain social realms created opportunities in for them in others.

4.2.1 Emily Kemp and Isabelle Williamson

One prolific female traveler and writer was British adventurer Emily Georgiana Kemp (1860-1939). Of the half dozen books she published, her first titled *The Face of China*, details her travels in northern China, from Shanghai to Shanxi province. Her narrative is prefaced with the disclaimer that "[t]here is so little in the volume which is drawn from other sources than personal observation, and information obtained from our Chinese and missionary friends on the spot, that I have thought well not to burden the reader with foot-notes."[7] Her personal observations favour the activities and existence of women within the places Kemp visits. While travelling from Shanghai, Kemp pays a visit to Taishan 泰山 in Shandong province 山東省, one of China's many historic sacred mountains. Kemp witnesses female worshippers making pilgrimage up the peak on their hands and knees and describes the mountain's history of imperial, Confucian and Daoist sacrifice.[8] Again in the city of Taiyuan in Shanxi, Kemp describes of the city's temples where "there is a deity to which

[7] Emily G. Kemp, *The Face of China*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1909), ix.
[8] Kemp, 49.

childless women especially come to pray," as well as a rich scene at a temple fair where, to the disapprovals of Kemp's male travel companions, women were in attendance.[9]

Another female author of note is Isabelle Williamson (b.?-1886?), a member of the London Missionary Society and wife of Scottish Protestant missionary Alexander Williamson (1829-1890). Her writing details her life in Shandong and her travels in northern China. Williamson explains that after becoming familiar with the language and the "habits and etiquette of the women" of Shandong she embarked on four journeys through China, two of which are described within *Old Highways in China.*[10] The objective of her travel was to missionize and spread the gospel to women across China. Her writing reflects on and describes the numerous social situations in which she engaged in dialogue with Chinese women of varying station and class. What is of most value to accounts like Williamson's is her engagement with women. More than providing mere descriptions of Chinese women, Williamson provides accounts of her conversations with them. She records the voices of actual Chinese women. Her writing details the social situations of the women she engages with, their dress, family, and most interestingly she records the questions these women pose to her during their discussions, thus offering real insight into the actual thoughts, concerns, and moralities of Chinese women.

4.2.2 Pearl S. Buck and Popular Success

Even outside the scope of specific writing on Chinese women or Chinese religion, Western female authors remained restricted in how their writing was received in the West. One of the most well known women to have found success in publishing about China was

[9] Kemp, 82.
[10] Isabelle Williamson, *Old Highways in China,* (New York: American Tract Society, 1884), 5.

author and social activist Pearl S. Buck. The resounding approval and acceptance of her novel *The Good Earth* among Western audiences sparked her career as a representative of real China. In self-proclaiming her childhood and mission life in China as "ordinary," Karen Leong argues that Buck "minimized the power of her whiteness and foreign nationality…[and] presented herself as a true friend of the Chinese people. Yet Buck's privileged position relied on a coercive authority."[11] It can be argued that Buck's ascribed authority and embedded Protestant ideologies led to a portrayal of Chinese characters that reiterate Orientalist discourse. It is interesting to note how her work of fiction, while distanced from the writing of Protestant mission women, contributed to and was a product of an already emergent gendered discourse of Chinese religion.

At the time of its publication, *The Good Earth* was credited with bringing the lives and struggles of real Chinese people into American consciousness—ironically through fictitious characters. Despite Buck's honest efforts in her fictional telling of early Twentieth Century rural China, she unwittingly "confirmed for American audiences their perceptions of the poor treatment and submissiveness of Chinese females, the amorality and untrustworthiness of males, and the agrarian timelessness of Chinese culture."[12] Buck's work contributed to the gendered discourse perpetuated by Orientalism at this time. Congruent with the thought of Edward Said, Buck's work presented Chinese people "in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment. The Orient was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women,

[11] Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 16.
[12] Ibid., 28.

the poor)…"[13] As Said explains, this framework "is especially evident in the writing of travellers and novelists: women are usually the creatures of a male power-fantasy. They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing…Moreover the male conception of the world…tends to be static, frozen, fixed eternally."[14] While Said's own argument pertains to an analysis of male authors, female authors, including missionaries, should not be excluded. Whether or not women's fiction and non-fiction writings perpetuated such stereotypes deserves further attention.

Some elements of Said's literary framework can be felt within Buck's fictitious characters, Wang Lung a poor farmer from a small village in Anhui Province 安徽省, and O-Lan a former slave to a family of wealthy land owners. Wang Lung's poverty and social class is illustrated through his marriage to O-Lan, an uneducated slave. In essence they both represent an Orientalist construction of non-elite Chinese society during the early Twentieth Century. O-Lan is a submissive slave with little personality and even less agency. Wang Lung is desperate, selfish, ignorant and weak. Buck's characters are representations of the same people that earlier missionary women encountered, yet her fictitious narrative was accepted, revered and popularized over the lived experience of other missionary women.

Buck presented images of China and the Chinese to America with similar tropes and language as those used by missionaries. While women like Nevius, Kemp and Williamson were publishing first hand accounts of rural Chinese life and Chinese people around and before the publication of *The Good Earth* in 1931, these women were not revered as

[13] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 25th edition, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1978), 207.
[14] Ibid., 207-208.

representatives of real China. The fact that the only woman of high regard publishing on Chinese culture at this time did so in the genre of fiction is significant. It emphasizes the social distance that women's writing and narratives had from perceived scholarly authority. Buck's cultural commentary was apparently only marketable to popular American culture as a work of fiction. Leong explains that Buck's "nonfiction pieces were considered based more on her personal observations and experiences than on 'facts.'....[and illustrates how] European-based forms of 'objective,' empirical knowledge have been privileges over lived experiences."[15] Even for Buck—a woman who eventually removed herself from and criticized the mission community, and whose fiction found renowned success—her lived and observed experiences were denied authority.

4.3 Missionary Interactions: Perpetuations of Protestant Presuppositions

In chapter two and three I introduced a number of American and European Protestant missionaries who lived and worked in both Zhejiang and Shanxi province. I used their work to illustrate the common themes and opinions these authors shared in their descriptions of Chinese religion, and Buddhism in particular. Here I return to an examination of the writings of each of those missionaries and reveal common ideological and theological threads within these authors' presentations of Chinese religion. When elements of these works are examined in relation to one another, a number of intriguing connections and similarities are uncovered. The first and most obvious connection, which I have briefly touched upon earlier, is the interaction these authors had with each other's work. This is an interaction that should not be overlooked. Conceptual and ideological

[15] Leong, 55.

similarities within these writings are indicative of the sharing and transference of Protestant ideology. As I will show, *how* missionary authors wrote about Chinese religion can be directly related to the authority these authors were ascribed.

4.3.1 Women's Narratives and the Deferral of Authority

Though not all missionaries were able to read or even comprehend classical Chinese texts, most were able to demonstrate a rudimentary knowledge of China's religious traditions. Each of the American Presbyterian missionaries I introduced in Chapter Two makes references to the sinological work of fellow American and British missionaries. Helen Nevius, for example, the wife of Princeton Theological Seminary graduate John Nevius, was likely influenced by the work of her husband. In her own account Helen Nevius reflects on her ignorance of the religious motivations of the Chinese. Humbling herself she writes, "I cannot enter upon this subject, which has been treated of at length by Mr. Nevius, in his 'China and the Chinese,' and in other works on China."[16] Yet she does go on to provide a basic introduction into the origins of Buddhism and Daoism—historical information that was acquired through interaction with her husband's research on Chinese religion and through these "other works on China" that she fails to name.

It may be safe to assume that these "other works" were that of her Presbyterian colleagues. We know that Helen Nevius was familiar with the writing and opinions of William Martin and Michael Culbertson. Early on in their missionary careers, all three Americans lived together in the Presbyterian mission compound at Ningbo.[17] Helen Nevius blatantly credits the work of her male colleagues. She describes the linguistic advantage of

[16] Helen Nevius, *Our Life in China,* (New York: Robert Carter and Brother, 1869), 60.
[17] Ibid., 26-27.

Martin, explaining that he "gave himself more particularly to book-making and literary labors, for which he was particularly fitted. All the gentlemen devoted more or less time to preaching. Very few ladies in Ningpo[sic] paid much attention to the written language,—a knowledge of the vernacular being fully sufficient for conducting their missionary labors either in schools or among the native women."[18]

Such a confession of illiteracy indicates that Helen, as well as Kemp and Williamson, likely did not consult primary Chinese language sources in their acquisition of religious knowledge, yet she clearly demonstrates a rudimentary historical, philosophical, and cosmological knowledge of Chinese religion. Despite witnessing the activities of devout pilgrims and temple festival participants, Kemp insists that temple sacrifices "were not very frequent," quoting a section from the Book of Rites (*Liji* 禮記), which warns against the frequent repetition of sacrifice.[19] She credits the English translation of the Book of Rites to that of Scottish missionary and Sinologist James Legge. The significance of this reference, and of James Legge will be discussed thoroughly in the sections below. Additionally, in her explanation of the social activities of Chinese women, Williamson also uses the Book of Rites as explanation for why Chinese women in north China are "exceedingly careful that their daughters should be trained to industrious habits."[20]

Helen Nevius' appears to belittle her own knowledge, overtly placing authority onto the work of here male colleagues. It seems to have been common practice for missionary authors to downplay the authority of their own experience with Chinese religion in contrast to the text-oriented explanations of religious history and practice found in the work of

[18] Ibid., 30.
[19] Kemp, 50-51.
[20] Williamson, 176-177.

other, revered, missionary authorities on the subject. All three women are compelled to find explanation for religious activity and social circumstance within textual sources. Their witnessing of these events and subsequent engagement with the women and men performing them does not stand alone as authoritative. All three of these authors consult an outside secondary (or translated) source for confirmation of what they are experiencing. As I will discuss further on in this chapter, these women's lack of "primary textual research" will inevitably limit the reception of their work. An overall academic inclination towards textual analysis and translation will overlook the validity of religious and ritual information found within their writing and others' like it.

4.3.2 Authority in Secondary Sources

Every missionary account I have explored here relies, at least to some extent, on secondary scholarship. This is done in order to legitimize their presentations of Chinese religion. The result however, inadvertently devalues the social and ritual information these works possess. In fact, as we shall see, each of the missionary works under examination here relied on preexisting sinological or philological scholarship, fostered a Protestant bias against ritual and placed scriptural authority over practical evidence. The footnotes found within these missionary accounts are evidence of the popularity of the early sinological and philological contributions of James Legge, Wells Williams, Ernst Johann Eitel, and Joseph Edkins.[21]

[21] Scottish born missionary, James Legge (1814-1897) is best known for his English language translation of the *Lun Yu* 論語. Legge is credited with the translating the English title as the *Confucian Analects*—which the collection of discussions and sayings is formally known by today. Legge's English translation was the second published in 1861, preceded by the 1828 version of David Collie. See Zhu Fang, "A Study of James Legge's English Translation of *Lun Yu*," *Canadian Social Science* Vol. 5 No. 6 (2009): 32-42. American Presbyterian, Samuel Wells Williams (1912-1884) is

Helen Nevius' writing is a prime example of the use of these scholars' philological contributions to foreign understandings of Chinese religion. Her opinions on Confucianism come in part from reading James Legge's translations of the Confucian classics. One prime example is found in Helen Nevius reference to the Five Virtues of Confucianism,[22] which she lists as "benevolence, uprightness, politeness, knowledge, and faithfulness."[23] The English translation of these terms is worthy of our attention, particularly her translation of *li* 禮 as "politeness." The term does not come close to encompassing how *li* functioned within the neo-Confucian lexicon. As Zhu Fang shows, the term was connected to the necessity of "personal and social regulation" as well as to the correct performance and adherence to sacrifice, laws, rituals and rites.[24] Helen's rendering of *li* as "politeness" can be read as a removal or denial of the ritual significance of Confucian morality. Whether this choice was conscious or not, it can be strongly inferred that Helen Nevius' Protestant denial of ritual authority may have lead to a rendering of the term essentially devoid of ritual connotation. Though she does state that her knowledge of the Confucian classics comes from a direct reading of Legge's translations, Legge himself defined *li* as "The fitness or propriety of

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best known for his two-volume compilation of Chinese history, politics, geography, language, culture and religion *The Middle Kingdom*, as well as for his creation of an English-Chinese dictionary and comprehensive map of China. See James Muhlenberg Bailey, "Obituary: Samuel Wells Williams," *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York*, 16 (1884): 186-193. German Protestant, Ernst Johann Eitel (1838-1908), expanding on the English-Chinese dictionary of Legge and Williams, published *Chinese Dictionary in the Cantonese Dialect* in 1877. See Anthony Sweeting, "E.J. Eitel's Europe in China: a reappraisal of the messages and the man," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 48 (2008): 89-109.

[22] Also known as Five Constant Virtues, Theodore De Bary illustrates how the five virtues of humanity (仁 ren), rightness (義 yi), ritual decorum (禮 li), wisdom(智 zhi), and trustworthiness (信 xin) developed from neo-Confucian philosophy of the Song dynasty. Theodore De Bary, *Sources of East Asian Tradition* Vol. 1, (New York: Columbian University Press, 2008): 336-360.

[23] Nevius, Helen, 64-65.

[24] Zhu Fang, "A Study of James Legge's English Translation of *Lun Yu*," *Canadian Social Science* Vol. 5 No. 6 (2009), 36-37.

things; rules of propriety; ceremonies."[25] It is unknown to me if elsewhere Legge attributes *li* to "politeness." Regardless, his own definition and use of *li* seems to lack a strong connection to ritual, as in "to bow" (*libai* 禮拜), at least within an overtly religious context.

John Nevius' own work also contains references to others research and translation of Chinese texts. In *China and the Chinese*, John Nevius does not provide his own translations of quotations from the Chinese classics, but rather relies on "the excellent translation made by Dr. Legge."[26] In John Nevius' listing of the Five Virtues, he offers a translation of *li* as "propriety," congruent with Legge's translation.[27] Here John Nevius elaborates on how *li* represents both inner and outer expressions of "form and ceremony," explaining that "[e]very inward state of feeling is supposed to have a proper outward expression. While the inner feeling naturally gives rise to its external manifestation, so the habitual cultivation of the outward forms of propriety tends to foster and develop the inner virtue."[28] Though John Nevius' explanation of *li* is more detailed than his wife's, he perpetuates the same rendering that Legge provides.

Helen and John Nevius' Protestant colleagues also express a heavy reliance on the preceding textual translations and social surveys of their fellow missionaries. Aside from knowledge of seemingly foundational philosophical concepts, missionaries strove to inform their understanding of China's history and social conditions. As I noted in Chapter Two Hampden Dubose attributes the "best thoughts" in his own work to Joseph Edkins, Ernst

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[25] James Legge, *The Chinese Classics: with a translation, critical and exegetical notes, prolegomena, and copious indexes,* Vol. 1, (Hong Kong: London Missionary Society's Printing Office, 1861) 354.
[26] John Nevius, *China and the Chinese,* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1882), 7.
[27] Fang, 37.
[28] Nevius, John, 52.

Johann Eitel, James Legge, and Samuel Beal.[29] John Nevius quotes at length from both Wells Williams' *Middle Kingdom* and Joseph Edkins' *Religious Conditions of the Chinese* in his review of both Chinese and Christian missionary history.[30] Michael Culbertson also relies on the detailed sinological account of Williams' *Middle Kingdom*. In the preface to his work Culbertson writes:

> Many of the facts mentioned are new, and have been drawn chiefly from the writer's own observation. He has not hesitated, however, to make use of the statements of others; and would acknowledge particularly his obligations to various writers in the Home and Foreign Record, the Foreign Missionary, the North China Herald—an English newspaper published in Shanghae [Shanghai]—and to Dr. William's Middle Kingdome[sic]. He would warmly recommend Dr. William's work to all who desire to extend their knowledge of the Chinese.[31]

A similar sentiment is also felt through Timothy Richard's work. Richard chronicles Edkins' role in maintaining alliances among missionary groups both home and abroad through his contributions to journal and publication services.[32] Richard also notes Wells Williams' *Middle Kingdom* as a point of reference in understanding missionary relations with the Chinese government.[33] Like so many others, his encounter with Confucianism was forged through reading James Legge's translated works.[34]

The work of T.M. Morris, who I introduced in Chapter Three, best exemplifies the fact that missionary accounts and publications were not only circulated among those working in

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[29] Hampden Dubose, *The Dragon, Image, and Demon or The Three Religions of China*, (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1887), 7.
[30] Nevius, John, 425-428.
[31] Michael Simpson Culbertson, *Darkness in the Flowery Land*, (New York: Charles Scribner, 1857), x-xi.
[32] Timothy Richard, *Forty Five Years in* China, (London: T. Fisher Unwin LTD., 1916), 188-189, 222, 227.
[33] Ibid., 87.
[34] Ibid., 86.

China, but also reached an international audience. Richard Glover's preface to *Winter in North China* indicates that his and Morris' introductory knowledge of Buddhism comes from reading Edkins.[35] As I have shown in the previous chapter, Morris' basic knowledge of Lama Buddhism in northern China is directly referenced from Edkins' work. Elsewhere, Morris quotes Edkins' analysis of Chinese moral systems and the role of Confucianism, labeling him as "one of our most reliable authorities on all such questions."[36]

4.3.3 Edkins and Textual Authority

The writings of and references to Joseph Edkins are perhaps some of the most intriguing I have encountered. While others confess to be influenced by previous scholarship, Edkins is a self-proclaimed pioneer. In the preface to the second edition of *Chinese Buddhism* Edkins writes, "it is better for me to follow my Chinese guides. Native Buddhist works by Chinese are, I believe, more entertaining and interesting than those written in Pali by Hindoos[sic]….what I give is taken from Chinese authorities, except where European writers are cited expressly."[37] Despite the claim that his work is unlike most others, Edkins' method remains exceedingly influenced by Protestant theology.

In his exploration of Chinese Buddhism Edkins claims a methodology that takes into account the so-called "transnational" interactions Buddhism underwent as a religion when its teachings were transmitted from India to China. Edkins believes that Chinese Buddhism has been undervalued by "Pali scholars," noting that Chinese Buddhism:

> …has gone through the purifying process of a thousand fights with Brahmins and other sects in India, with Parasees, Manichæāns, and Christians abroad,

[35] T M Morris, *Winter in North China,* (New York & Chicago: Fleming H Revell Company, 1892), 7.
[36] Ibid., 215-216.
[37] Joseph Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism: A volume of sketches. Historical, Descriptive, and Critical,* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co. Ltd, 1893), xv.

> and with Confucianists in China. The Chinese author thinks much of style, and possesses an immense repertoire of elegant phrases. The original Sanskrit is changed into these phrases, and comes to mean something much nearer to men's business and bosoms, and more polished in expression, than it did in the Indian form.[38]

Edkins perpetuates a style of scholarship that looks exclusively to textual sources in his explanation of Chinese Buddhism. In fact, as Leon Hurvitz points out, despite Edkins' linguistic prowess, his fluency in English, French, German and his "command over the Chinese written language…[w]hat he knew of India had to be derived from the writings of his fellow Europeans."[39] Edkins' linguistic analysis references are almost exclusively made to the textual studies of other European scholarship. For example, when discussing the patriarchs of northern Buddhism Edkins refers to Wells Williams English rendering of certain Buddhist terms and uses Eitel's *Handbook of Chinese Buddhism,* a Sanskrit-Chinese dictionary, in his explanation of numerous terms and concepts.[40] Despite his claim to better represent the essence of Chinese Buddhism, Edkins' methodology ultimately relies on the secondary translation of Sanskrit texts and Indian Buddhist terminology by fellow Protestants and Western scholars. His work only furthers the linguistic and philological development that Religious Studies took in its infancy towards the textual (miss)appropriation of religious authority. The popularity of his work within academic settings suggests that his style and method was clearly favoured over the less textually supported work of others.

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[38] Ibid., xiv.
[39] Leon Hurvitz, "Review: *Chinese Buddhism: A Volume of Sketches, Historical, Descriptive, and Critical* by Joseph Edkins," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 89 No.3 (1969): 650.
[40] Edkins, 62, 72.

4.4 Missionary Publication and Academic Preference

James Legge's textual translations, Wells Williams' *Middle Kingdom,* and numerous works by Joseph Edkins were demonstrably influential within the realm of their missionary peers. The wide circulation of their work indicates that Protestant missionaries sought to reify their own knowledge of Chinese religion through linguistic studies and classical texts. The reaches of Legge's and Edkins' sinological and philological scholarship far surpassed the audiences of fellow foreign missionaries. Popular accounts of Chinese culture and religion produced by Edkins and Legge would soon come to serve and influence Western educational institutions. James Legge would eventually become the "first Professor of Chinese at Oxford and…a close associate of the controversial entrepreneur of British Orientalism, Frederick Max Müller."[41]

4.4.1 Publishing Prowess

As I have shown above the study of footnotes and references illustrates a direct connection between individuals and ideas. But not everyone found the same success. How did the work of certain missionaries come to be more influential in the scholarly realm than others? The changes and growth to print culture that developed in relation to foreign missions should not be overlooked. The influence of publishing companies, and their abilities to circulate literature throughout differing markets may have played a role in perpetuating certain missionary ideals over others. In 1912, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co. Ltd.—the British company that published both Edkins' *Chinese Buddhism* (among many of his works) and James Legge's *The Chinese Classics*—merged with what was then called

[41] N. J. Girardot, "James Legge and the Strange Saga of British Sinology and the Comparative Science of Religions in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 12 Vol. 2 (2002), 155.

George Routledge & Sons to form what is known today simply as Routledge, the world's largest academic publisher in the humanities and social science.[42] In contrast, the Fleming H Revell Company that published the less popular work of William Martin and T. M. Morris exists today as the Evangelical Christian book publisher Baker Publishing Group.[43] Martin's and Morris' works did not go on to find the same fame and influence as did the works of Edkins and Legge. At the time, these publishers functioned as a platform on which Chinese religion was introduced into Western consciousness while simultaneously circulating Protestant ideology. Yet, some were obviously more successful than others. Though not all of the missionary works I have explored above forged a place within the sphere of academic influence, some did. The potential reasons for which, I think, are worth further exploration.

4.4.2 Textual Validation Over Narratives of Experience

There is an obvious perception that women's accounts were less academically and rhetorically useful as a source of information about China. I think this has to do with the methodology through which women engaged with Chinese society. Overall, the written accounts of women, Helen Nevius included, do not seek to confirm religious authority or authenticity from primary Chinese textual or scriptural material alone. Though they did seek out secondary sources to inform themselves on certain topics—as we saw with Helen Nevius' reference to both Legge and her husband—women's writing is overall more socially descriptive. Helen meticulously tracks the movement of her fellow missionaries and

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[42] "Full view of record: Routledge," *Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd Archives*, UCL Archives, retrieved from http://archives.ucl.ac.uk/DServe/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqCmd=Show.tcl&dsqSearch=RefNo==%27ROUTLEDGE%27&dsqDb=Catalog March 24, 2017.
[43] "About Revell," *Baker Publishing Group*, retrieved from http://bakerpublishinggroup.com/revell/about-revell March 24, 2017.

Chinese converts, she notes the different people she meets and the social situation she engages in. She describes Chinese life as she encounters it—without the need to trace rituals or customs back to their textual origins.

The socially insightful narratives that Helen Nevius, Kemp and Williamson tell falls out of the scope of what was then deemed the boundaries of academic literature. Yet this methodological bias is not limited to women's work. The accounts of male missionaries whose writing style mirrors that of Helen Nevius appear to have found similar reception. For example, William Martin and Timothy Richard did not go on to receive the same academic praise that Joseph Edkins did. Martin's account, informative as it is about Chinese religion, more closely resembles a personal journal. He presents a linear account of his travels throughout China and takes the time to depict the individual encounters and experiences he has. Despite the intimate depictions his writing provides about monastic life and ritual practice, his work did not find reward within the academic world.

4.4.3 Richard's Comparative Religion

Timothy Richard, whom I introduced in the previous chapter, is well known for his practical and ideological contribution to a humanitarian missionizing approach. Richard's personal accounts of his time in China remain influential within the legacy of the China Inland Mission's history. He is not remembered, however, for his interest in Buddhism or his translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Lai Pan-chu has recently pointed out that Richard, unlike many of his contemporaries, "endeavored to promote a dialogue between Christianity and other religions, especially Chinese Buddhism."[44] Despite his work having an obvious role in

[44] Lai Pan-chu, "Timothy Richard's Buddhist-Christian Studies," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* Vol. 29 (2009): 23.

interreligious dialogue and the growth of the comparative study of religion, Richard is not academically commended for his work or his Buddhist textual translations.

Richard claimed that "translation should be more faithful to the Buddhist tradition and could harmonize most fully with Christian philosophy and religion."[45] This claim came from his belief in the succession of Chinese (Mahayana) Buddhism over its older Indian (Hinayana) counterpart—much like how, he thought, the New Testament had superseded the authority of the Old Testament. As a result, his method of translation did not reach back into "Old Buddhism's" Indian textual origins. This is an obvious contrast to the translation style of Joseph Edkins, whose work went on to find academic validation. Pan-chu concludes that Richard's understanding of Buddhism was informed by his particular "universalist" understanding of the Christian mission goal, to bring "Buddhists and Christians together to work together to serve humankind."[46] His method of translation appears to have come from a differing perspective on salvation and truth than that of James Legge and Joseph Edkins. While Richard searched for morally conceptual comparability between Buddhism and Christianity, missionaries who would go on to find academic recognition did so through the linguistic lineage of Buddhist moral and philosophical terms. The latter approach found authority.

4.5 Revising Textual Authority and Manuscript Methods

As I indicated in the introduction of this thesis, my interest in the materiality of missionary sources is inspired by more recent scholarship on hand-copied Chinese

[45] Ibid., 28.
[46] Ibid., 30

manuscripts. I believe missionary accounts possess a similar, if not even grater, functionality. Ritual practice and religious activity are discussed and described within the missionary writings of men and women. However, these descriptions are loaded with ignorance, prejudice and overt value judgments. By looking into the material and social aspects of missionary writings, I believe we can better discern a socio-historical context in which to read them. Much like scholars of Chinese manuscripts use colophons to decipher facts about the production, function, context, exchange, consumption and transformation of material culture,[47] we can use the footnotes, copyright pages and indexes to decipher the social and cultural relevance of missionary writings—both within a Chinese and Western-Protestant context. Sam van Schaik, a scholar of Tibetan manuscripts, explains, "[w]hen we study ancient manuscripts we are faced with the material remains of a social group. Instead of mining this material for interesting texts, and stripping out the material context, we could use all of the context we can get our hands on to reconstruct the patterns of behaviour, the forms of life, of which these objects were once an integral part."[48]

4.5. 1 Missionary Accounts as Manuscripts

The benefit of approaching missionary accounts in a methodologically similar manner to the study of manuscripts is twofold. First, paying attention to the materiality of missionary works reveals where and how Protestant theologies were constructed and

[47] Theses elements of material culture, which are often used as a rubric in the study of manuscripts are outlined by Clive Gamble to be the most common method of breaking down and examining material objects—particularly in the field of archaeology. Clive Gamble, *Archaeology: The Basics*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), 100-101.

[48] Sam van Schaik, "The Uses of Implements are Different: Reflections on the Functions of Tibetan Manuscripts," in Orna Almogi, ed., *Tibetan Manuscript and Xylograph Traditions: The Written Word and Its Media within the Tibetan Culture Sphere*, (Hamburg: Department of Indian and Tibetan Studies, 2016), 222.

disseminated within Western perceptions and understandings of Chinese religion. We can then attempt to trace how certain ideologies were perpetuated within both Western and Chinese scholarly and religious traditions. Second, the act of tracing certain theological biases lends itself to shaping a greater cultural contextualization in which to read missionary accounts. This in turn allows the scholar to distinguish relevant social, cultural and religious information.

However, manuscripts and missionary writings are of two very different time periods. It may be instructive to mention several marked differences between medieval manuscripts and missionary accounts; these differences affect how I examine the materiality of missionary writings. First, missionary writings are quite recent in comparison to the wealth of East Asian religious manuscripts. Their comparatively recent production is an advantage. Less time between the production of these sources and our use of them, in theory, leaves less time for the physical loss of or damage to these sources. Second, the authorship of the missionary accounts I use is undisputed. With sound knowledge of authorship comes the ability to discern further information about these writings themselves, such as the purpose for their creation, their intended audience, and overall reception. The relatively recent production of missionary accounts also means that, in some instances, secondary information about these authors and their work exists.

Additionally, missionary accounts are original texts, unlike many of today's existing manuscripts. By and large, Chinese manuscripts are part of a series of copies or translations from an original— for some manuscript scholars it is in the comparison of the material differences, errors of transcription, omissions, and changes in manuscripts from copy to copy that reveal the social meaning and cultural significance of these texts. The production

of missionary accounts has had much less "room for error." As a result we must look to different material aspects of these sources in order to derive information about their social meaning and cultural significance. The footnotes, publication information, preface, and references found within missionary accounts can be likened to the colophons and punctuation marks of copied manuscript in the potential historical information they reveal.

This chapter has shown how the prevalence of scriptural authority in the study of Chinese religion was forged within and disseminated throughout early Protestant missionary writing. I have argued that if we take into account the construction and publication of these writings the prevalence of Protestant presuppositions within missionary writings can be contextualized. In valuing missionary writings as more than just the stories they tell we stand to learn more from them. I have shown how a certain style and form of missionary writing found preference over others and revealed one reason why philological analysis originated as the dominant means to study Chinese religion. What I will discuss further in the concluding chapter is how the popular missionary authors I have discussed above went on to solidify a place within academic institutions in Europe and America. Additionally, I will attempt to show how this Western academic tradition has impressed itself upon the history, development, and changes now found within contemporary Chinese religion.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Reviving Religious Studies Through Ritual

In an attempt to overcome the continued neglect of non-elite narratives of Chinese religion, this thesis has taken an approach towards religion as lived and acted through ritual. Despite growing calls for the recognition of human agency within the academic study of Chinese religion, our methodological approaches continue to prevent us from connecting with the broader reaches of ritual history. At the onset of this thesis I have shown how the field is now theoretically primed for ritual-driven studies of non-elite religion, and yet our knowledge of *who* embodies ritual and *how* ritual was practiced remains limited at best. Recognizing this gap in knowledge, I have presented one means to begin filling in non-elite historical narratives. My goal in doing so has not been to reinvent the field, but rather to shift how we approach and use the sources that we do in order to reveal human agency. The ability to recognize this agency is due in part to a thorough understanding and acceptance of our own historicity within the Western advent of Religious Studies.

Through the specific example of Christian missionary accounts I have begun to trace how Euro-American, Protestant ideologies came to be embedded within allegedly post-Orientalist Twenty-First Century scholarship. What this study has revealed is that within the genre of missionary writing there is a little recognized sub-genre. Preconceived notions of academic authority and authenticity relegated the writings of Protestant women to the realm of personal experience, which sat far below the scholarly realm of empirical data and philological analysis. On the one hand, oddly enough, a similar prejudice towards

missionary accounts remains today. Scholars have avoided their use because they fear the Orientalism and racism found therein. How can we rely on sources that clearly demonstrate racism, Orientalist ideologies and personal opinions? I, on the other hand, find these aspects of missionary accounts to be precisely what makes them valuable. They contain missionaries' first-hand narratives, stories, thoughts, and opinions. These sources, therefore, provide us with on-the-ground accounts of Chinese people, society, culture, and religion. If ever there was a source that humanizes history, it is the personal journals, letters, and stories of these missionary men and women.

I have chosen to read missionary accounts both literally and materially—albeit within a highly contextualized and ritual-focused framework. Missionary accounts can be read for the information and perspectives they offer about Chinese society and religion, which was their intended purpose at the time of their production. We must keep this in mind. If missionary accounts are not historically or culturally read within the globalized context of their conception, one risks promoting mere apologetics. The genre of missionary writing is a result of cultural and intellectual exchanges—through these writings we can trace how theologies and ideologies were perceived and exchanged reciprocally between Protestant Westerners and the Chinese. By contextualizing these sources, I have also created a space where they can be read literally without fear of perpetuating racism or cultural imperialism. This space has been forged in large part to the centrality I place upon ritual, the human body, and on action. Simply put, I define ritual as what people do or did, which is more difficult to contest than what people think or thought. When religion is recognized and understood from a practice-based perspective, the historical depictions of ritual found within missionary accounts can be seen to provide substantial information.

Chapters Two and Three have served as a rudimentary introduction into how missionary accounts can be read and used to inform our historical perspectives on Chinese religion. I have provided two distinct applications of my methodological approach to sites of historical religious significance in China. Similarities in terms of how both Putuoshan and Wutaishan are depicted could be found. Continuity was found most prominently in how the mountain, its structures and its people were classified through missionary taxonomies. Both sites are classified as Buddhist, as sacred, and as a pilgrimage centre. Helen Nevius describes Putuoshan as being "devoted exclusively to the Buddhists; having four large temples with monasteries attached, and not far from a hundred smaller ones. The number of priests is variously estimated from seven or eight hundred, to several thousands."[1] Timothy Richard similarly writes of Wutaishan, stating "There is in Shansi one of the five mountains sacred to the Buddhist religion. This is Wu T'ai Shan… On the mountain were numbers of monasteries, with thousands of monks belonging to two sects of Buddhism—the one the ordinary blue-robed Buddhists of China, the other the yellow and red robed Buddhists of Tibet and Mongolia, called Lamas."[2]

However, it is the differences between how these sites are classified through ritual depictions that is of interest to me. The two quotations provided above hint to how Wutaishan had a far more convoluted Buddhist identity. As Chapter Three has shown, missionaries classified and divided the Buddhist groups through physical (or ritual) differences, by their dress and in their actions. And while both sacred mountains are said to

[1] Helen Nevius, *Our Life in China,* (New York: Robert Carter and Brother, 1869), 45-46.
[2] Timothy Richard, *Forty Five Years in* China, (London: T. Fisher Unwin LTD., 1916), 169-170

have received the patronage and financial support of emperors past,[3] Wutaishan remained connected to the imperial court. The role of Tibetan Lamas in Beijing offers perspectives into how religious and ethic identity was negotiated and governed within China.

There is, however, a marked difference in how missionaries perceived the state of both sacred mountains in light of the political state of Chinese religion at the time. I believe these differing representations tell us something important about how scholars and historians have interpreted the connection between religion and politics in late Qing dynasty China. Missionaries adapted and ascribed dichotomous classifications to Chinese religion and thereby constructed an institutional view of Buddhism. Buddhism was, therefore, to be known and experienced through the doctrines (sūtras), buildings (temples) and clergy (monks and nuns) to which missionaries assigned authority. In Chapter Two I explored missionaries' detailed criticism of the declining physical state of temples and in the "idiotic" and "idolatrous" practices of the clergy. The buildings on Putuoshan were in ruin and the monastics community had no knowledge of their own religious texts—obviously Buddhism was failing. And yet, in missionary depictions of the seemingly more quotidian activities of China's non-elite, a different image of Chinese religion is revealed. While patronage to the island of Putuoshan was in decline, pilgrimage to Buddhist sites in neighbouring Ningbo and Hangzhou remained widespread. We found this in the descriptions of the lively temple fair scenes provided by John Nevius and his colleagues. Here, seemingly non-religious activities were carried out alongside rituals. While pilgrimage, and the travel and devotion of monastics were said to be deteriorating, the daily

[3] Missionaries describe evidence of past imperial patronage and commemorative stele inscribed with details of the ritual and financial donations of past Emperors. Most frequently, mentions of Emperor Kangxi's patronage commonly appear in accounts on both Putuoshan and Wutaishan.

worship of women within local temple spaces indicated a lively ritual and social environment.

Alternately and somewhat surprisingly Wutaishan is depicted in a far different light. The monastic community was active and involved in performing ritual activities and maintaining their temples and monasteries. This is evident through Richards' description of the *cham* dance, or in Gilmour's explanation of the large "collection expeditions" across Mongolia undertaken by the monks. Not to mention the numerous references to the large amount of lay Mongolian pilgrims who saw Wutaishan as their own Buddhist "Mecca".[4] Despite also being a centre of Chinese Buddhist pilgrimage at the time, Wutaishan appears to have been in far less a state of decline and disrepair than Putuoshan was said to have experienced at the time. There is a sense that Wutaishan was popular and therefore a successful site for pilgrimage because it was a centre for disparate Buddhist groups. These groups are distinguished largely by variances in both ethnicity and ritual practices.

The accounts of Wutaishan examined in Chapter Three offer the contemporary scholar a means by which to distinguish and examine Buddhist sects that may prove more fruitful than dominant doctrinal methods. This is an examination through ritual practices rather than preconceived textual classifications. Richard presents us with examples of what specific groups on Wutaishan were actually doing when he describes the Tibetan *cham* dance. For Richard, this event took place at the "Central Lama monastery," and is clearly marked in contrast to the Chinese temple and ritual events he later witnessed.[5] Even the women at Wutaishan performed rituals unlike those conducted by women in Zhejiang

[4] See Chapter Three, note 37.
[5] See Chapter Three, note 28.

province. The women are clearly marked as Mongolian, which is evidenced by the decorative headscarves they wear. However, they also differ from Chinese women in the rituals they perform. While women were found making prostrations and repeating the name of the Buddha at temples in Hangzhou,[6] the women at Wutaishan circumambulate stūpas while spinning prayer wheels.[7]

Finally, in Chapter Four I explored how and why women's voices have been avoided, overlooked, and suppressed within the academic study of Chinese religion. Alternatively, I explained why it is necessary to recognize the potential these missionary sources hold for informing and rounding out China's social and religious history. Female missionaries had direct interactions with Chinese women. Their written accounts provide insights into the non-elite realm of Chinese society—an area that has been largely inaccessible to modern scholars. Denying that these sources possess any authoritative evidence or practical information speaks to larger biases within Western scholarship. The actual voices of missionary women and their experiences have been relegated to the realm of the emotional. This mirrors the methodological biases of scholars past to regard textual sources as evidence above and beyond the actual religious practices of the Chinese. The devaluation of women's narratives is evidenced through the publication and reception of women's writing within Europe and North America at the time. As I have shown in Chapter Four, the writings of Helen Nevius, Emily Kemp, Isabelle Williamson, and even Pearl S. Buck did not or could not enter into the realm of academic validation due to their personal or ethnographic tone. Protestant presuppositions influenced the invalidation of theses sources as authoritative

[6] See Chapter Two, note 40.
[7] See Chapter Three, note 46.

because they did not seek to confirm their experiences with primary textual sources. The biases that relegated the writing of missionary women to "mere opinion," I believe are part and parcel the same biases Gregory Schopen criticizes. Scholarship on Chinese religion and Chinese Buddhism has perpetuated similar constraints to those found in Schopen's example of Indian Buddhism, and as a result has and continues to devalue sources that express the actual practices of Chinese Buddhists.

In contrasting the argument made by J. W. de Jong that missionary accounts cannot be taken seriously because missionaries' knowledge "was based upon what they observed…but very rarely on the study of Buddhist literature itself,"[8] Schopen explains:

> Notice only that it is again clear that for this position Buddhism is based on "texts," that it can be really—do we dare to say "correctly"—understood only by a study of its "scripture." The implicit judgment, of course, is that real Buddhism is textual Buddhism. Notice that Buddhist "ideas"—at least "correct" Buddhist ideas—apparently do not reside in what Buddhists actually do or in what their "priests" say in conversation. Notice that knowledge based on observation of actual behavior is not adequate.[9]

The value in, and need for, the study of missionary accounts lies precisely in the their possession of the actual actions, practices, and thoughts of Chinese people.

5.2 Future Considerations

5.2.1 Gendered Perspectives

My analysis has only brushed upon the potential that missionary accounts may have for informing religious histories. I would like to include here just a few of the directions in

[8] For full quotation see Chapter One, note 26.
[9] Gregory Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," in *History of Religions*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1991), 15.

which I believe this research could follow. First, it seems somewhat obvious to more fully probe the gendered discourses that arise from a detailed analysis of these sources. Scholarship on the side of American women's missionary work, suffrage movements, and gender equality is fairly well rounded.[10] Additionally, some work has been written about missionary relations to women's rights movements within China itself.[11] However, I see a potential to bring missionary deceptions of Chinese women, their physical body as well as their social identities into contact with the Chinese feminist thought being produced at the time. This includes the likes of social theorist He-Yin Zhen 何殷震 (1884-1920) and some of her less radical male contemporaries like Liang Qichao 梁啓超 (1873-1929).[12] The benefit of such a study would not only better inform our knowledge of gender and social politics of

[10] These works in particular focus on informing the history of American and European missionary Women, and note how their lives and work contributed to change within Western society. For a few examples see: Beaver, R Pierce. *American Protestant Women in World Mission: A History of the First Feminist Movement in North America.* Michigan: William B Publishing Co., (1968); Reeves-Ellington, Barbara, Kathryn Kish Sklar and Connie A Shemo, editors. *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, (2010); Semple, Rhonda Anne. *Missionary Women: Gender, Professionalism and the Victorian Idea of Christian Missions*. Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, (2003).

[11] The most notable example of this type of engagement is found in the study of foot binding, an act that many missionary men and women were extremely opposed to. Missionaries engaged with the Chinese, even creating anti-footbinding organization like the Heavenly Foot Society formed by Rev. John MacGowan in 1875, in order to bring about 'liberation' to women oppressed by this form of bodily mutilation. See Ko, Dorothy. *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding*. Berkeley: University of California Press, (2005).

[12] He-Yin Zhen was one of the first female voices within Chinese feminism to emerge from the late Qing. Her writing and thought has rarely been brought into dialogue with studies of Chinese women, gender, or feminism within the same timeframe. Rather Western theories are commonly placed within the Chinese context with little regard to issues of linguistic and conceptual presupposition. Late Qing Chinese feminists did not construct, historicize, or dichotomize gender in the same way their contemporary Western counterparts did. This point is dealt with and overcome by Lydia Lui et. al's translation and discussion on He-Yin's feminist theory. See Lui, Lydia, Rebecca Karl, and Dorothy Ko. *The Birth of Chinese Feminism: Essential Texts in Transnational Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, (2013).

the time, but also illuminate how Chinese feminist thought contrasted, functioned, and interacted with arguably influential Western ideologies.

5.2.2 A More Nuanced Approach to China's Adoption/Adaptations of Christian-Western Ideologies and Taxonomies

There still remains a pressing need to better understand the ways in which China engaged with the modern world on the eve of the Twentieth Century. Missionary accounts may offer us better insights into how ideologies and taxonomies transcended cultural and religious boundaries within both Chinese and missionary realms. Such an exploration could help correct the ignorance or biases that remain commonplace within contemporary scholarship on "modern China." In the case of the academic study of Chinese religion, Western derived taxonomies have been and continue to be imposed to the point that, as Robert Campany so poignantly stated, our imposed category of religion "shapes not only the answers to our historical and interpretive questions but also the very form of those questions and, therefore, the form that any possible answer can take."[13] How much more so the case in Western perspectives of Chinese politics and social history?

5.2.3 Studying Religion, Ritual, and Modern China

The halls of Buddhist temples in China today are occupied by a far broader-reaching demographic than they were in the mid-Nineteenth Century. A number of factors have affected the current state of temple sites and sacred space in China today, the freedom to practice government-sanctioned religions, China's explosive middle class, and the country's multi-billion dollar tourism industry to name a few. These factors among others, contribute

[13] Robert Ford Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions (In the Modern West and In Early Medieval China)," *History of Religions*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (2003), 290-291.

to the overwhelming number and variety of individuals visiting, touring, and ritualizing within sacred space. Today the study of religion in modern China deals much more with the rituals and religious movements of China's growing middle class, of the laity. However, I feel that these studies commonly lack either a thorough historical contextualization or the crucial connection to ritual.

As I continue my research I would like to bridge the history of missionary accounts with contemporary religious practice and uncover the "legitimized continuity"[14] or perhaps what may be the authenticity that has remained in ritual and sustained its legitimacy. The goal in doing so would be to come to a better understanding of how ritual continues to function socially and culturally within modern China. Unlike in the past, ritual now encounters and functions within an environment of commercialization and domestic tourism. I feel it is necessary for us, as scholars, to map and understand the changes and developments that contemporary Chinese religious practice is undergoing.

The potential and success of any further scholarship on missionary accounts and Chinese religion begins first with an awareness of the human body, of actual people doing actual things. As Catherine Bell wrote, "the body effectively constitutes both the self and the universe of which it is a part. Ritual, by focusing on the making and remaking of the body, reproduces the sociopolitical context in which it takes place while also attempting to transform it."[15] The goal in my pursuit of further research will be to improve the means by

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[14] This term comes Catherine Bell's ritual framework, which involves knowing that ritual consists of essential dimensions, one of which is the historical—the fixed and unchanging aspect of ritual that offers "a sense of legitimized continuity with the past…In the fixity of ritual's structure lies the prestige of tradition and in this prestige lies its power." See Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* 120.

[15] Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 209.

which we study Chinese history in order to improve our knowledge of non-elite religious practice and of Chinese women. This, quite simply, begins with recognizing the authority and authenticity of women and their actions.

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